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Legislative
Assembly
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Mercredi
1^{er} août 2018

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 1 August 2018

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 1^{er} août 2018

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Let us pray.
Prayers.

NOTICES OF REASONED AMENDMENTS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 71(c), the member for Toronto–Danforth and the member for Scarborough–Guildwood have filed with the Clerk reasoned amendments to the motion for second reading of Bill 5, An Act to amend the City of Toronto Act, 2006, the Municipal Act, 2001 and the Municipal Elections Act, 1996. The order for second reading of Bill 5 may therefore not be called today.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT POLICIES

POLITIQUES DU GOUVERNEMENT

Resuming the debate adjourned on July 31, 2018, on the motion regarding government priorities.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Further debate? The member for Whitby, I think, had the floor when we last dealt with this. The member for Whitby.

Mr. Lorne Coe: It's a pleasure to continue the debate on government order 2. For the benefit of our viewers, I want to read into the record government order 2: "That, in the opinion of this House, the current government is a government for the people with a clear mandate to pursue policies that put more money in people's pockets; create and protect jobs; address the hydro crisis; reduce hospital wait times; and restore accountability and trust in government."

With respect to the last aspect that I just read of government order 2, "restore accountability and trust in government," I'd like to turn to the initiative of the government in passing legislation to end the strike at York University.

Speaker, you will know that in the last session, I had the privilege for a better part of two years to be the official opposition critic for education and post-secondary education. In that particular capacity, I travelled the province to visit every community college campus and university campuses and engage with not only the academic staff and the administration staff, but also students and teachers at each particular outlet.

But in the discussions at York University, it became clear that students needed to be in class. They needed to be in class. We needed to save the fall semester for those students. Some 45,000 students were affected. Can you imagine? Forty-five thousand students.

So, given the action of this government in concluding the strike, York University will now be able to resume normal operations and students will soon be able to complete their winter courses, as they should. Getting the York University students back to class, Speaker, as you know and as others in this Legislative Assembly know, was a top priority for the government. We have delivered. Once again, we have delivered on a promise to protect students and their families by passing legislation to end the longest post-secondary strike in Canadian history quickly and fairly. Promises made, promises kept.

During this process at York University, we heard loud and clear from the people of Ontario; particularly, in fact, from students and their families—lots of emails, lots of telephone calls—that action was needed. Action was needed now to end the disruptive strike. I and others in the Ontario Progressive Conservative caucus are glad to see thousands of students heading back to class and being able to conclude their studies and fulfill their particular objectives going forward.

I'm conscious of the time that I have remaining, which is about a minute and 12 seconds, so I'd like to turn to another aspect of government order 2, and that is putting more money in people's pocket. Yesterday and in the days before, we talked about ending the cap-and-trade carbon tax here in Ontario. Every cent spent from the cap-and-trade slush fund is money that we know historically was taken out of the pockets of Ontario families and businesses. Cap-and-trade and carbon tax schemes are no more than government cash grabs that do nothing for the environment, while hitting people in the wallet in order to fund big government programs. Promises made, promises kept.

Yesterday when I spoke—I'm going to conclude—I talked about the late American president John F. Kennedy. He said this: "Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or the present are certain to miss the future."

Well, it's clear, Speaker, that this government has a mandate for change and we're progressing down that path. We will today and we will in the weeks and months ahead.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Miss Monique Taylor: I am pleased to rise to speak on behalf of the people of Hamilton Mountain.

Since this is the first portion of debate for me, I would like to take the time to thank the people of Hamilton Mountain who have chosen me to represent them here at Queen's Park. From the bottom of my heart, I thank them for the trust that they have shown in me by re-electing me to a third term. I also want to thank the members of my campaign team who, over the course of the campaign, put in extraordinary effort, working 12 or more hours a day, each and every day. It was a tough haul, but it was made all the easier with a platform that offered change for the better and hope for our future; a message that was delivered with class, integrity and an undeniable commitment by our leader, Andrea Horwath, a person who, of course, is well known to the people of Hamilton Mountain.

Beyond the immediate team we of course had an energetic and resourceful team of volunteers who came to help with various tasks in the campaign. Whether it be canvassing their neighbours or on the doorstep or by making phone calls, doing office work or putting up signs, they were always there to do what was needed. None of what we achieved—it couldn't have been possible without the hundreds of volunteers that it takes to make a campaign tick. Through it all, not for one minute did any one of those hundreds of people think that they were doing it for any other reason than for the people—the people that I now again represent.

I knew when I first came here in 2011 that I was here for the people. I knew, when I first decided to run for office, that I was doing it for the people. And through the last seven years, that has always been my reason for getting up in the morning: the people. That is why we are all elected and that is what we do as MPPs. And in that role, I find myself here today speaking to a motion that starts with the words, "in the opinion of this House, the current government is a government for the people." And I wonder why this government feels the burning need to say this phrase over and over and over again.

0910

There's an old saying, Speaker, that if you say something often enough, it becomes the truth, regardless of whether there is any merit to what is being said. I would suggest that this barrage of "for the people" is not only an empty slogan but it is one that indicates the exact opposite of what is playing out before us.

Throughout the election campaign and in the days since, we have seen example after example of a government that shows no respect for the people and the democratic process that put the power in their hands. During the campaign, they put voters in the position of having to make up their minds without any real plan from the Conservatives and with no information of the costing of what they said they would do.

The first step in being "for the people" is showing respect for the people. And I've seen enough evidence from this Premier to say that he is sadly lacking in this regard. He refused to clearly outline what he would do during the campaign. During the leader's debate, he told

voters that they should talk to their boss to find out who they should vote for. In fact, he said it twice, maybe even more. How disrespectful can you be? "You don't need to worry your little heads about any details of my plan, and make sure you check in with your boss before voting." And he's for the people? Seriously? I'm not quite so sure.

Voters in Ontario deserve to be treated with respect. They have minds of their own and they can decide for themselves. They need the details to be able to do that—they don't need to ask their boss who to vote for—details that this government and this Premier denied them through the entire four weeks of the campaign. Now, in the early days of this government, we see that same disrespectful attitude continuing, a cavalier approach to barrelling ahead with wrong-headed ideas, sparing little thought for their consequences.

We have a sex ed curriculum that has been working fine since 2015, yet this government has decided that we should roll things back to 1998, when the curriculum was last updated. This decision makes it clear that this government is only for some of the people; in fact, a very small proportion of the people who seem to have the Premier's ear.

I have certainly heard from people about this rollback of our curriculum—many of them, in fact—and I'd like to share some of that with you today. Here's an email I've received in my constituency office: "I am writing to you this morning to voice my deep concerns in the elimination of the current sexual education curriculum that Premier Ford is putting forth.

"I am a mother of two boys in the elementary school system and an employee of a women's shelter and I know that teaching our children about consent, healthy relationships with oneself and each other, cyberbullying, same-sex relationships and so much more is critical in the development of these children and their relationships.

"We need a current, relevant curriculum in place so we do not fail our children. Girls and women are sexually harassed, raped and murdered at an alarming rate in our country, and consent and the cycle of abuse needs to be taught—age-appropriately—throughout the elementary years before they get to high school.

"My kids are fortunate that my husband and I will continue to keep these conversations in our home so that they are aware of healthy relationships but as we all know, not all parents are this comfortable, or will talk to their kids about sex and all of the other topics and, as well, many kids are growing up in abusive homes where they will only learn unhealthy ways to communicate and show love."

Carly, another constituent of Hamilton Mountain, said this: "The old curriculum has not been updated since 1998 and is incredibly exclusive. It doesn't cover topics that are so important in 2018—online bullying, sexting, same-sex marriage, gender identity etc.

"I want to live in a province that is focused on moving forward and improving the future of our children. We are literally moving backwards. We aren't teaching inclusivity. We aren't showing children that love takes different

forms. We aren't helping children see the ways bullying impacts a life."

These are just some of the comments that I've received on this topic, and I know members opposite have received similar emails and phone calls that are voicing the same or similar concerns.

The Premier now says that consultation will be done, starting in September, before a decision is made on what will be the new curriculum. I know many people that I've spoken to are anxious to take part in those consultations, but given the Premier's actions over the past couple of weeks and last Friday in particular, I'm not sure that I have much faith in how far those consultations will go.

I'm referring, of course, to the Premier's unilateral decision to completely steamroll over our municipal democratic process here in Toronto and in the regions of Niagara, Peel, York and Muskoka. He's doing this because he's "spoken to people." Well, I don't know who all he's spoken to, but it certainly doesn't describe a consultation.

Less than two months after a provincial election that made him the Premier, an election in which this was never raised, he is using his provincial power to interfere in a municipal election and to settle old scores with political enemies. In the middle of the campaign, he is changing the rules, with no warning and no consultation.

He is stripping the city of Toronto of the authority to set its own ward boundaries—boundaries that were previously set with considerable consultation with the people of Toronto. And he is limiting the access of the people of Toronto to their city councillors.

He is denying the people of Muskoka, Peel, York and Niagara the ability to vote for their own regional chair. Let that sink in. On July 26, the people in those regions were weighing up which candidate they were going to vote for. On July 27, they found out that the Premier of our province said that they will no longer have that say. It's an abuse of power and an affront to democracy—democracy, a system in which the supreme power is vested in the people. And this from a government claiming to be a "government for the people."

I'll be honest: On the night of June 7, I was worried about what lay ahead for Ontario. But I never thought that I would be witness to such hypocrisy in this chamber, and certainly not within a few weeks of this government's mandate. Each day that passes, it becomes increasingly clear that this government is only for some of the people. It certainly doesn't appear to be the government of First Nations people or the Indigenous people of Ontario.

Let me share some of the words of Tessa, another constituent of Hamilton Mountain:

"I am writing this email as a teacher, Ontarian and as a witness and supporter of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

"I wish to voice my disgust and dismay that the newly elected Premier of Ontario has cancelled the TRC curriculum-writing project, meant to support teachers as

we take on our duty of bearing witness and facilitating the calls to action of the TRC.

"We cannot allow the systemic racism and 'othering' of the FNMI people to continue, and yet, Mr. Ford has clearly, yet again, demonstrated his archaic and discriminatory views through his actions.

"I trust you will speak on my behalf and stand as a witness as well, insisting that our Premier takes up the calls to action and reverses this poor decision."

The work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was a critical undertaking. It must be respected if we are ever to properly grow as a province and a country. The truths were painful and difficult—painful for those who lived through the horrors of the residential school system and those who continue to suffer as a result. To say it was a difficult time would do the experience a disservice; it was much more than difficult. But it was difficult to listen to those testimonies. How could humans act in such a way to fellow humans? But we had to listen, and we're better for it, painful as it is.

The reconciliation will take years, decades, perhaps generations, but it must be a serious part of our school curriculum, and it must be a serious part of the work of this government. Instead, this government removed the reference of reconciliation and folded the Ministry of Indigenous Affairs in with the Ministry of Energy, Northern Development and Mines. Those are not the actions of a government for the people.

0920

This is not a government for the people who desperately need mental health services. Last spring, in the face of 12,000 children and youth waiting a year or more for mental health services, the Legislative Assembly voted unanimously—Speaker, as you know, because I believe you voted for it also—in support of my motion to eliminate those wait-lists. Many of those who voted in favour of that motion are now sitting on the government benches across the way. And I wonder what has changed because instead of taking action to make that a reality, this government will scrap the previously promised \$2.1 billion over four years for mental health and replace it with \$1.9 billion over 10 years. That's a cut of \$330 million each year to mental health and addictions funding.

What about those people living on social assistance who for years have been absolutely unable to make ends meet? I was going to say struggled to make ends meet, but that would suggest that they managed with difficulty. The fact is that they don't make ends meet. Every month they go without: They go without food, they go without the clothing they need or the heat they need in their home; they go without the dental care or drugs they need to stay healthy. And just yesterday, we heard that those people will no longer receive the 3% increase that they were promised, and will only get 1.5% instead.

On top of this, the government announced that they would be ending the Basic Income Pilot, which has been operating in my home city of Hamilton, as well as Brantford, Lindsay and Thunder Bay. We're just over

one year into a three-year pilot program that gave a sustainable future for so many low-income families. How can a program possibly be evaluated in such a short time? Because it's not just about the money, it's about how the program is able to turn people's lives around. It's about the impact that it has on their health and, of course, on our health care system and so much more. But this government, with the stroke of a pen, just cancels it and strips away all the hope with absolutely no consultation. Has the minister ever come to Hamilton to talk to some of the people who are on the Basic Income Pilot? Probably not.

So no, this is not a government for those people who need our help the most.

Speaker, neither is this a government for the people who care about our environment and are concerned about climate change. Tackling climate change requires a global response, and with the Cap and Trade Cancellation Act, this government is shirking its responsibilities to Ontarians now and into the future. There are no commitments to lowering greenhouse gas emissions—a move that takes us backwards. Contracts are being ripped up and this new legislation ensures any compensation will be kept to a bare minimum.

A few weeks back, the government was forced to change the deadlines for access to the Green Ontario Fund because they clearly had no idea of the timelines involved in the home renovation business. Even with the extended deadlines, there will still be people left high and dry after thinking that they would get a rebate on the work being done—work that would save energy.

I hear from people in the process of buying an electric car, but will no longer be able to afford them and will lose their deposit in the thousands of dollars.

Then there's the \$100 million that was going to fund school maintenance and repairs from the fund—\$2.15 million of it was for the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board—gone, just like that. Thanks to an extremely flawed funding formula brought in by the Conservatives and continued by the Liberals, our schools are in disrepair to the tune of billions of dollars. That \$100 million was badly needed and now it's gone.

And all of this with no consultation—barrel forward, rip up the contracts and deny any compensation.

This also is not a government for 80% of Ontarians who say they want hydro in public hands. The Premier made a big thing during the campaign about how he would get rid of the so-called six-million-dollar man. What he didn't say in the process is that he would now be a nine-million-dollar man. We don't know the details of that backroom deal that was struck, but what we do know is that the people of Ontario want to know what is in that deal for the CEO and the board of directors.

We in the NDP have tried to get a full disclosure of all the compensation, but that was denied by the government. This self-proclaimed "government for the people" won't tell the people what was discussed or decided.

Meanwhile, the real problem with hydro, the fact that it has been privatized, is allowed to carry on: no real

control, no accountability, no transparency, and ever-increasing prices for hydro users.

These are just some of the people that this government is clearly not for. Unfortunately, I have little doubt that we will continue to see more examples as the weeks and months go by.

Before I finish, I want to briefly touch on another aspect of this motion, and that is the idea that this government has a "clear mandate." Nothing could be further from the truth. First is the obvious fact that with 40% of votes cast, it is hard to argue that it is a "clear mandate." More people voted for another party than voted for the government. They got about 2.3 million votes from a voting population of over 10 million. Those numbers don't say "clear mandate" to me or anyone else who looks at them rationally.

On top of that is a serious challenge in understanding exactly what those 2.3 million voted for when the Conservatives spent the entire campaign with no platform. Yes, they voted for you, but I can guarantee you they didn't vote for the government to do everything or most of what they are currently doing. Some will have voted for them for some of it; some will have voted for them for none of it.

This motion is a joke. After cutting off debate on actual legislation, we are spending time discussing a motion that is no more than continued sloganeering from a government acting like a bunch of chest-thumping prizefighters. This government imposed time allocation on legislation that was before this House for no reason other than to curtail the ability of elected MPPs to speak to it, a job that we were sent here to do for the people. Just in case they haven't paid attention, Speaker, that's democracy.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Ms. Jill Dunlop: I'm honoured to rise today in this historic and magnificent building as a newly elected member of the Ontario Legislature and as the new representative for the electoral district of Simcoe North. I am proud to be joining Premier Ford's team as one of 76 Ontario Progressive Conservative members. This is a team that is ready to restore responsibility, accountability and trust to government; a team that continues to fulfill its promises; a team that has already demonstrated a swift and efficient action plan; a team that will continue to deliver meaningful results to the people of Ontario.

I would also like to express my sincerest appreciation and gratitude to the constituents of Simcoe North for selecting me to be their new voice at Queen's Park. Simcoe North has always been my home, and I am truly grateful to have the opportunity to work towards the betterment of this riding and this province.

I would like to take a moment to recognize all of the wonderful people that volunteered on my campaign.

I want to first thank my campaign manager, Stu Spiers. Stu provided me wisdom and guidance throughout my campaign. He was a true team captain.

I was also very fortunate to have a group of incredibly hard-working, compassionate and approachable volunteers working in my campaign offices. Darylene, Joanne, Mary and Judy ensured that every visitor to our offices felt welcome and comfortable. Uncle Doug Reed resumed his place in the Midland bunker, as he does for every federal and provincial election.

To my sign crew—Frank, Bob, Bill, Jim, Don and Walter—I can't thank them enough for their tireless hard work. Simcoe North is a very large riding, and these gentlemen spent weeks driving all around it while putting up signs, and then again to take them all down.

My dedicated canvassers were legendary. John, Cam, Don and Leah were an essential part of my team. They battled through rain, hail and snow. They walked kilometre after kilometre, in temperatures ranging from minus-30- to plus-30-degree heat. There were days in January when residents suggested that it might be better to come back and campaign in May, but I promised them I would be back again then.

0930

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, I want to acknowledge my parents. My parents are no strangers to campaigns. Plain and simple, my parents work very, very hard. They care about their community as much as they care about their family. They sacrificed a significant amount of time to assist with my campaign, and I am forever grateful for their love and support.

The success of any election campaign is a result of a true team effort. I stand here today as a testament to the generosity of these hard-working individuals.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to take this time to congratulate my new colleagues on both sides of the House. Election campaigns, as we all know, are no easy task, and I applaud all of you for your resilience and determination. It is a privilege to be surrounded by so many knowledgeable, compassionate and hard-working members. I look forward to our collaboration in the months and years ahead.

As is customary during one's maiden speech, I would now like to share a few words about my riding of Simcoe North. In 1912, Stephen Leacock first published *Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town*. He wrote of a charming and quaint lakeside community known as Mariposa. His stories endearingly capture the adventures and challenges experienced by the many characters of this small, rural town. It is often the strength and unity of Mariposa's community members that allow them to find positive solutions when faced with difficult circumstances.

Mr. Speaker, many now believe that Leacock's depiction of Mariposa was influenced by a number of communities and landmarks in what is now the modern-day electoral district of Simcoe North. This is fitting, as Stephen Leacock's message of community, solidarity and friendship still ring true in this area today. Simcoe North is a quintessential representation of small-town, rural Ontario. Simcoe North is a culturally and geographically diverse area of the province. Our riding has a population of approximately 121,000 people. This number is

continually growing as we welcome newcomers from all around the world.

Within our boundaries are beautiful Georgian Bay, Lake Simcoe and Lake Couchiching, all connected by the Trent-Severn Waterway. We also have a great number of other small lakes, rivers and streams that are enjoyed by tourists and locals as well. In our riding are a number of provincial parks, including Mara, McRae Point, Bass Lake and Awenda Provincial Parks. These provincial parks provide excellent opportunities for families to experience the great outdoors while camping, fishing and swimming.

The rolling hills of Oro-Medonte are home to three of Ontario's most popular skiing destinations, these being the downhill ski resorts of Horseshoe Valley ski resort and Mount St. Louis Moonstone.

Hardwood Ski and Bike has over 100 kilometres of beautiful rolling trails through hardwood and pine forests for cross-country skiing and mountain biking. We also have an extensive network of biking, hiking and snowshoe trails. Ontario trails link our riding from Ramara township to the town of Midland.

The riding is comprised of the municipal governments of the city of Orillia, the towns of Midland and Penetanguishene, as well as the townships of Severn, Ramara, Oro-Medonte, Tiny and Tay.

Mr. Speaker, I'm also very proud that within our electoral district are two First Nation communities. These communities are the Chippewas of Rama First Nation and Beausoleil First Nation on Christian Island.

This past weekend, I had the pleasure of attending a traditional headdress ceremony at Beausoleil First Nation. I thank the residents of Christian Island for welcoming me into their community and sharing their unique perspectives with me. I was honoured to celebrate the sanctioning of the new custom headdress for the Beausoleil First Nation. The headdress serves as a significant symbol of strength, bravery and individuality. While the headdress is certainly beautiful, it most strongly represents the virtue of traditions and customs.

I gain valuable knowledge from everyone I talk to, every time I visit. So thank you for being so gracious in engaging in open dialogue with me. I'm also planning to meet with their youth council in the coming weeks.

Simcoe North is also home to the largest French-Canadian community in central Ontario, in the Lafontaine-Penetanguishene region. Last month, I was delighted to attend the Festival du Loup in Lafontaine. The festival was a celebration of French-Canadian language, culture and music.

Je suis honorée de pouvoir travailler aux côtés de nos communautés autochtones et francophones dans le but de faire reconnaître et respecter leur héritage culturel et linguistique.

I look forward to working alongside our Aboriginal and French-Canadian communities in Simcoe North to continually support and uphold their distinct languages and cultural history. And I promise my French will get better.

Our riding has a number of primary employment industries, including agriculture, tourism, the service industry and small manufacturing. I am proud of our government's mandate to create and protect jobs in Ontario. In particular, I look forward to promoting and supporting skilled trades in our riding to create better jobs for my constituents.

Simcoe North is also home to a number of post-secondary institutions. We are pleased to have Georgian College campuses in Midland and Orillia, as well as a Lakehead University campus in Orillia.

As a mother of three and a former Georgian College faculty member, I recognize the challenges facing our emerging workforce and the environment our students are graduating into. I believe that we need to build strong partnerships between education, employers and their communities to support and engage our youth, newcomers and new businesses.

Simcoe North is home to the Ontario Provincial Police headquarters, as well as the OPP central region headquarters. My partner, Steve Cartwright, is a sergeant with the OPP and has served for 28 years. I am thankful that my government is committed to providing the resources and training to keep police officers safe and reduce violence in our communities. We will listen to and respect our police officers and front-line workers.

This past week, Premier Ford was the first Premier to ever attend a graduation ceremony at the Ontario Police College in Aylmer, Ontario.

My riding is home to nine Royal Canadian Legion branches. In fact, we have so many Remembrance Day services and a limited number of pipes and drums bands, that the services are spread out over two weeks. Legion branches and the ladies' auxiliary are a vital part of our communities across Ontario and Canada. They are committed to making a difference in the lives of veterans and their families, providing essential services in our communities and remembering the men and women who sacrificed for our country. Our party will always have a profound respect for our veterans, soldiers and police.

Our hospitals in Simcoe North include Georgian Bay General Hospital in Midland and Soldiers' Memorial Hospital in Orillia. Georgian Bay General Hospital is thrilled to open their newly renovated emergency department next month that will better serve the residents of Midland and area and provide better working conditions for doctors, nurses and all staff at the hospital.

Also within our riding is Waypoint Centre for Mental Health Care in Penetanguishene. Waypoint is one of Canada's leading mental health facilities, providing exceptional mental health care and research. Waypoint provides the province's only high-security forensic health program for patients served by both the justice and health care systems.

I am proud of our government's commitment to improving mental health services in Ontario and of our pledge to spend \$1.9 billion, matched with the federal contribution for a combined total of \$3.8 billion, over 10 years.

We also have a provincial-government-managed maximum security prison in the riding. Central North Correctional Centre has a capacity of over 1,800 inmates and offers rehabilitation and education programs for male and female inmates. I've had the opportunity to tour the facility during my years at Georgian College with my students. But, more recently, I met and toured with management and correctional officers.

The previous Liberal government left corrections in a crisis. The PC government recently committed to hiring more correctional workers, as well as probation and parole officers, to end the crisis. In fact, our Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, Minister Tibollo, attended the Correctional Officer Training and Assessment graduation in Hamilton last week. Some 182 men and women graduated to become correctional officers and are being deployed as of Monday this week. Correctional workers finally have a government who will listen and end the crisis in corrections.

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Our riding is also home to Casino Rama, the only First Nations resort casino in the province. Located on Rama First Nation, a progressive community rich in history, the property was built and designed to pay homage to the culture and proud heritage of Rama First Nation. Celebrating 20 successful years, the resort casino has become a major source of employment in my riding, engaging more than 2,500 crew members in over 340 different types of positions. The resort continues to benefit Simcoe North's tourism through its outstanding entertainment attractions.

Mr. Speaker, Simcoe North has a wonderful community of artists. Charles Pachter, one of Canada's leading contemporary artists, resides in the riding, and is transforming the local landscape and architecture. Charles is an Officer of the Order of Canada, a member of the Order of Ontario and holds honorary doctorates from Brock University, OCAD University and the University of Toronto. His iconic Canadian work includes the mural Hockey Knights in Canada, which can be seen in Toronto's College subway station, and his famous images of the royal family, moose and maple leaf flag are pop icons of Canadian art.

Folk music hero Gordon Lightfoot also grew up in the riding. Lightfoot is a member of the Canadian Songwriters Hall Of Fame and a recent recipient of the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal and the Governor General's Performing Arts Award. He is a Canadian icon, and continues to make musical appearances in his hometown of Orillia. Just recently, Mr. Lightfoot made an appearance at the annual Mariposa Folk Festival.

Simcoe North is also home to an Ontario landmark to cottage-goers and the travelling public, a must-have as you enter Muskoka: Webers, on Highway 11. During the campaign, I was able to grab a cheeseburger and a milkshake with Premier Ford as we met with cottagers and the Webers cooking staff. Simcoe North is a beautiful area of the province, and I encourage all of you to visit it when you have an opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, as previously mentioned, in support of our government's commitment to create and protect jobs, one of my primary objectives as an MPP is to improve the existing skilled trades framework in Simcoe North and throughout the province. During the election campaign, I met with representatives from a wide range of businesses, including small construction company owners, a hardware store entrepreneur, the Weber Manufacturing president, a Magna divisional president and two marina general managers. Every person I talked to identified a shortage of well-educated and well-trained tradespeople as a key obstacle to sustaining or growing their business. Additionally, everyone acknowledged that the shortage is getting worse and that immediate actions need to be identified and executed. These meetings and conversations reinforced that this issue is impacting all trades in a wide variety of skilled-trades-related businesses.

In response to this message, last week I tabled a motion calling for our government to respond to this important issue. I was thrilled that this motion was given support by our government. I look forward to collaborating with the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities and the Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade, on this tremendous policy opportunity.

As a result of the positive response by our government, a number of skilled trades organizations contacted me expressing incredible enthusiasm for the future of skilled trades in Simcoe North, and in Ontario as a whole. I also received a number of emails, messages and tweets from a number of organizations: the Ontario Chamber of Commerce; the Ramara, Gananoque and Simcoe chambers of commerce; Merit Ontario; the Ontario Home Builders' Association; the Kingston Home Builders Association; Trillium auto dealers; the Progressive Contractors Association of Canada; and the Ontario Skilled Trades Alliance.

Our party campaigned on a promise to create and protect jobs, to respect the taxpayer, to reduce gas prices and lower hydro bills and to open Ontario for business. Already our government is upholding these commitments and promises. With the passing of Bill 2, our government has proven its commitment to transparency and respect for the Ontario taxpayer. Our government has taken meaningful steps towards reducing hydro rates and restoring trust and accountability in government.

As a former Georgian College instructor, I am very pleased that our government has ended one of Canada's longest-ever university strikes. Some 45,000 York University students were impacted by this strike. Students are paying for higher education and deserve to be back in the classroom.

Additionally, our party campaigned with a clear commitment to eliminate the cap-and-trade carbon tax. Once again, promise made, promise kept. Mr. Speaker, our government is taking a giant step forward through the Cap and Trade Cancellation Act. Eliminating the cap-and-trade carbon tax will save families in Ontario an

average of \$260 per year. It is also an essential step for reducing gas prices by 10 cents per litre.

Mr. Speaker, for those of you who don't know me, I grew up in a political family. My father, Garfield, was the former MPP for Simcoe North, serving from 1999 to 2015. My mother, Jane, has served two terms as a councillor in the township of Severn, and I'm very excited to announce that she was just acclaimed as the deputy mayor. I have been campaigning since the age of five—not specifically for this election—but this is where my love and respect of politics began.

I'm honoured to be the first-ever female elected as an MPP in Simcoe North. This is especially important to me as a mother of three independent, hard-working, intelligent and incredibly thoughtful daughters. Yes, I am a proud mother. Two of my daughters will be attending the University of Toronto this fall. Rachel, my eldest, is studying history, and my middle daughter, Karley, is studying commerce at the Rotman School of Management. My youngest daughter, Madison, is entering grade 11 at Orillia Secondary School. Two of my daughters have previously been pages in the House. I want a better Ontario for my daughters and for all young people.

It's not the government that makes Ontario great. Ontario is great because of the people. Our people are smart, kind and, above all, striving to create a better life for themselves and their families. Government's job is to create the conditions for those people to flourish. Sadly, that is not the case for many in our province.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to be part of a government that has already proven we will keep our promise and listen to the people of Ontario and front-line workers to make life more affordable in Ontario.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Please be seated. Further debate.

Applause.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Thank you to the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound for his encouragement, although I don't need too much encouragement to undertake this morning's debate. I'm looking forward to sharing our thoughts on this government motion.

I'm happy to read the motion so that we are all on the same page, so to speak: "That, in the opinion of this House, the current government is a government for the people, with a clear mandate to pursue policies that put more money in people's pockets; create and protect jobs; address the hydro crisis; reduce hospital wait times; and restore accountability and trust in government." That's the text of the motion and I'm very glad to be able to take it apart, and debate and discuss.

This motion, Speaker, holds this government up to be a government for the people. We hear that ad nauseam, I would say: a "government for the people." But I would argue that it is indeed a government for their people. I am going to proceed to make that argument.

But first, I'd like to share with you something that happened in my riding on Sunday. I had the opportunity to attend an annual rally that they call the LIFE Rally.

That stands for “love is for everyone.” It is a group of community members who have come together, I would say organically, through the years, every Sunday from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. at the corner of John and Simcoe, and they give free hugs, free conversations and free sandwiches. They hold signs that say, “Ask me why I’m giving out free sandwiches.” People from across the community, those living in the margins or those just driving by, have understood that this group is trying to build a bit of community. Well, they had their annual rally, where they had free haircuts and they gave out food. Many different faith groups were there giving out free food to our street-involved community, to those living in the margins and those living with challenges. But I wonder: This Premier and this government, are they for those people? Are those people part of their people?

At that LIFE Rally, constituents asked me about social assistance, they asked me about the promised 3% increase and they were quite concerned. At that point, on Sunday, all I had to go on was what we had heard in this House.

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In response to a question asked by my colleague from Ottawa Centre about whether those on Ontario Works and ODSP recipients would receive the increases in support that they were indeed counting on, at that time, on July 19, the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services said: “As you are well aware, I’ve got five ministries coming into one ... I’m still being briefed, as I mentioned, on all aspects of my portfolio, but this is a very important one and I want to make sure that the people, particularly the most vulnerable, in our province and in our city are looked after....

“Let’s face it, true income security in this province will be a job, and we will continue to make sure that people are getting the supports they need in order to work and keep more money that they have....

“We want to make sure that Ontario is open for business, more people are working in this province and life is more affordable when they drive their car, when they buy their house or when they send their kid off to university. That’s what our focus is going to be—but I can assure you of one thing: Ontario’s back.”

When I shared this with one man who had worked for years, then suffered a health-related injury and is now on ODSP—he is not a man who will be able to benefit from a job, he is not a man who is worried about car payments, mortgage payments or sending a child to university. This is a government that talks about “a hand up, not a hand-out.” They say it like that’s a statement to be proud of, instead of recognizing that people aren’t asking for hand ups or handouts, they’re asking to put one foot in front of the other to be able to just find a path without discrimination and derision, a path with dignity, so that they can indeed participate in our communities.

I’d like to read parts from, actually, three letters. There’s a gentleman in my community named Arnaldo. He’s very active in our community and is someone who

is also on social assistance. Life has taken a turn for this gentleman. I will read part of his letters:

“My name is Arnaldo. I am 56 years old. I live in Oshawa, Ontario. The reason that I am writing to you is the fact that I had it all at one point—employment, a fiancée, a car. Now, I have nothing. I don’t have employment, or a fiancée, or a car. I am living in poverty. I am on ODSP and CPP-D and making approximately \$1,100 a month. That is lower than the minimum wage. Under all the rules and regulations I must follow, where does it say that I must live in poverty? I have depression, anxiety. I never have a smile on my face. I used to be the life of the party.”

“I am not being heard. My opinion seems not important ... I am losing out because I am on ODSP and CPP-D.”

“The reason I am writing to you is because of ODSP.... I have to pay extra. ODSP does not cover needle and lancets for diabetics.... I feel that I am not important. My story does not mean anything.... I would like some answers in a positive manner” and “an increase of ODSP funding so” that I can “live in dignity.... Make some noise and get the Ford government to be accountable to all citizens of Ontario, not a select few. There are four years. I don’t want to wait four years with no positive answers or changes....

“Thanks,
“Arnaldo.”

I pulled that from three letters. We’ve been advocating for this gentleman for years with the previous government. Unfortunately, now, after yesterday’s announcement, I have to return to my community and explain to Arnaldo that this government, actually, unexpectedly, stopped the Basic Income Pilot, announced social assistance cuts ending the Basic Income Pilot.

Yes, they had promised in the campaign to see it through. No. That was a promise. I don’t know why the government members right now are not chanting and seal-clapping at this promise, but they promised to see the income pilot through to its end. It was a promise made. Oh, no instinct there to clap and—okay. But I guess they only keep their promises to some of the people.

With the Basic Income Pilot, was it yielding evidence that people cannot actually continue to live in forced poverty? I know that the press wanted to know at their announcement yesterday about the results of the ongoing pilot that they prematurely stopped. They danced around it and taxpayer-paid ministry staff apparently clapped them out of the room. This is what we have now, when we want answers, when we want better for more people. So the current government is a government for their people. People who need help don’t seem to be their people. People who live in poverty don’t seem to be their people.

Another part of this motion said that they have a mandate to pursue policies that put more money in people’s pockets—not the pockets of those who were a part of the Basic Income Pilot, not those who are living

without dignity, forced to live in poverty on social assistance, not those people. And Ford's pledge to cancel the minimum wage increase? Well, that's not more money for low-income earners, not for their pockets.

Another part of this motion is that they had a mandate to create and protect jobs. President Trump's threat to impose tariffs on the automotive sector and auto parts import sector would be devastating to Ontario's auto sector. I've asked a question in the Legislature. This is something we have been talking about. Ontario has no strategic plan for an industry that accounts for one fifth, or 20%, of our GDP. We do need a strategy.

The Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade went to Washington. We want to know what he demanded. We want to know: What did this government fight for? In what way did this government stand up for auto? Reassurances aren't going to cut it. We want to know what was accomplished.

A week or two ago, Premier Ford fired Ontario's trade representative in Washington. Okay. That's their right, to reassign or re-evaluate, but what's the plan now? Do we have a new representative? Is there anyone there on our behalf? We know—and this government seems to take exception, which I see as a good sign, that they would take exception to what I'm going to say now—that Conservatives in the past have said that they would be content to see Ontario's auto sector die. But there wasn't a single mention of auto manufacturing from the Conservatives in the run-up to the election.

The PC Party promised to kill the Jobs and Prosperity Fund, which invests millions of dollars across the sector.

That is what we do know.

Now, when I asked the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade about this, he did say, "I know the NDP have asked this of the former government on many occasions, so I have directed the department to begin work on a comprehensive auto strategy." Great. I'm looking forward to that. I have every faith that if we have a comprehensive automotive strategy, that would be a very good thing for Ontario. So we will wait, we will watch and we will cross our fingers.

One other thing that I will flag for the government: Yesterday, I introduced what is now Bill 12 to re-introduce my Fairness for the Auto Sector Act. If they're going to stand up for automotive, perhaps they would like to take a look at that and ensure that all workers in Ontario have the same entitlements. Auto workers deserve the same access to leave and entitlements as every other worker as provided by the Employment Standards Act. What is fair for all should be true for all, not all minus auto workers. I do hope that the government supports my bill and recognizes that auto workers deserve equal leave and entitlements.

Again, as I was saying, the current government is a government for their people. People who work in the automotive sector don't seem to be their people. It remains to be seen.

Another part of their motion was that they have a mandate to address the hydro crisis. Speaker, in my

riding I had collected hydro bills from constituents. I had invited them to drop off their hydro bills, and I sent them across and put them on the desk of the then Premier. It became clear during that exercise that people across my community and, I know, across all of our communities are very upset about the rising hydro costs. Interestingly, the PCs had started privatization under Harris, and that resulted in astronomical rate increases that varied wildly depending on where you lived.

The Liberals' fair hydro plan has done so much damage, and damage heading forward to the next generation, and this government is continuing with it and unfortunately not bringing hydro back into public hands.

I'm going to read something: "Ontario's Deficit Is Growing—and the Fair Hydro Plan Is Largely to Blame." This is from December 2017, but the part that I wanted to share is a reminder about just how detrimental this fair hydro plan that this government is continuing with is, and how challenged we're going to be because of it.

The Financial Accountability Office says that the province will add \$75 billion to its debt over the next four years. "By 2021-22, the FAO expects the deficit to reach \$9.8 billion, because the province will no longer be able to rely on one-time revenues" such as the sale of Hydro One. But the biggest piece of the puzzle is the fair hydro plan.

The Progressive Conservatives were eager to jump on the FAO's report: "'It's distressing to hear another story like this that shows that the Liberals aren't being honest with the people of Ontario about the province's fiscal realities,' said Todd Smith, the PC energy critic"—hey, I know that guy.

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It continues: "The government announced its fair hydro plan, a subsidy that was not included in government accounting, because funding for the rate cut is being borrowed through Ontario Power Generation...."

"The AG said at the time of her report's release that the move will cost taxpayers an extra \$4 billion in interest on the debt over the course of the program...."

"The FAO expects that the fair hydro plan will increase program spending by an average of \$2.8 billion per year."

This team is okay with that. They are continuing with that fair hydro plan, which is a challenge. So, I would say, the current government is a government for their people. People who are worried about hydro debt for their children don't seem to be their people.

Also, part of their motion says that they have a mandate to reduce hospital wait times. The Premier's mental health funding cut of \$330 million annually isn't going to help reduce hospital wait times. I'm happy to read from this article: "Tories Blasted for \$335-Million Cut in Planned Spending on Mental Health."

"Health Minister Christine Elliott is under fire for cutting \$335 million from planned mental health funding in Ontario this year...."

"But that means a planned \$525-million annual injection in new funding has been reduced to \$190

million.” It begs the question: Why is the premier cutting new funding for mental health by \$330 million a year?

This is not going to help reduce hospital wait times. People struggling with mental health cannot get help. There isn’t enough help across our communities. We don’t have the services. We aren’t prioritizing mental health care. Cutting mental health funding is wrong.

Interjections.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: The enthusiastic member from King–Vaughan can think that cutting mental health funding is the right thing to do, is the right path. I’m not sure why the enthusiastic heckling. The only paths that exist for people struggling with the mental health crisis right now are jail or the hospital, and our police are interfacing with crisis every day. What are their options? De-escalation? Absolutely, of course. But then what happens?

People in crisis may or may not be capable of de-escalation, because that is the nature of mental health crises. Those individuals end up in jail or in the hospitals. If they end up in jail, they’re the responsibility, then, of our correctional workers, our correctional officers and nurses who don’t have the tools or resources to provide the support that those struggling with mental health issues require. Again, how does this reduce hospital wait times? The current government is a government for their people. People who are struggling with mental health unfortunately don’t seem to be their people.

Also part of the motion is that they have a mandate to restore accountability and trust in government. We’ve been talking at length in this House about this government changing the rules mid-game, their vendetta against city council, the Premier’s fixation with Toronto, and attacking democracy and rigging a municipal election without consultation, and manipulating regional chair elections.

A reminder: What we say in this Legislature, we are supposed to stand by. But the now-Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, back in 2012, said, “It speaks to the very core of our democracy.” I’m sorry; this was on the Municipal Amendment Act, regarding the election of chair of York region.

“I know the experience they’ve had in their regions, and I know that the politicians in Durham are very excited about this, and about their opportunity as well....

“The folks in York region ... have looked at this as a very positive change, so I hope that members will support this legislation. And perhaps we can expand it at some point down the road for all regions in the province of Ontario.” My, how things change.

If we’re going to talk about accountability and trust in government, I seem to remember, leading up to the election, that there were—and I don’t remember what the number landed at—29 individuals being investigated for the 407 data breach scandal, or whatever that is that’s brewing. That is ongoing. That does not help folks have trust in government, when that is looming, when that is hovering; sort of this stench of fraud that is hovering.

This is a government that did not have a mandate to cut social assistance rates, and that actually cam-

paigned—while they campaigned—that they were going to see that Basic Income Pilot all the way through: “Just kidding. Promise made—no, shh. Start the car.” What?

The other thing is, no consultation when it comes to city hall and Toronto, but promised consultations when it comes to the health and physical education curriculum and the growth and development or sex ed expectations—to call it a curriculum is interesting; it’s a few expectations. But that seems to be steered by extremists and people who seem to want to take us back in time when it comes to health, well-being and sexual health and safety.

This is a government that didn’t have a platform leading into the election. This is a government that has been focusing on the feds when it comes to immigration, and trying desperately to wiggle their way out of their legal provincial responsibilities to newcomers and people seeking refuge and asylum—their provincial responsibilities. Whether they want them or not doesn’t mean that they don’t have them.

They’ve been celebrating legislating workers back to work, signalling once again to employers that they don’t have to bargain in good faith because this government will give them a sneaky way out of having to negotiate with their employees for improved working and, in this case, learning conditions. That is a shame. That is not something to celebrate. Undermining collective bargaining is problematic.

When it comes to the wind farms and some of the legislation we’ve already seen, this government has found an escape hatch to slip out of its own contracts, which signals to businesses that while this government says they are open for business it actually means that businesses had better be wary, because entering into a contract with this government will leave businesses open.

In summary, this is quite a motion. I have a few friendly amendments to offer: That, in the opinion of this House, the current government is a government for the people who aren’t doing their best to survive on social assistance; for the people—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Order, please.

Look, things are going along pretty good. I also want to remind everyone in the Legislature that if there is going to be some of what I call chirping, one must be in their own seat to do so. Surprise, surprise, but that’s the way we conduct business here in the Legislature.

We will return back to the member from Oshawa and restart the clock again.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Thank you, Speaker. Again, in summary, as we’ve been debating this motion, I have a few friendly amendments to add:

That, in the opinion of this House, the current government is a government for the people who aren’t doing their best to survive on social assistance; for the people who don’t have disabilities; for the people who don’t live in poverty; for the people who don’t live in the margins; for the people who don’t cost money; who don’t earn minimum wage; who don’t work in the automotive

sector; who don't mind if hydro debt is passed on to their children; for people who don't struggle with mental health and addictions; who don't believe children should learn about consent, healthy relationships, family diversity, healthy bodies, LGBTQ issues or online safety; for the people who do not come to Canada or Ontario seeking refuge or asylum; who do not belong to a union or have bargained collective agreements; and for the people who do not expect this government to honour its contracts.

In short, the current government is a government for their people.

I would ask the actual people of Ontario who are watching the shenanigans of this Premier and government whether or not they are indeed the right sort of people—if they are indeed the very few people that this government purports to represent.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Ms. Donna Skelly: It's really an honour to be standing up in the Legislature speaking at length for the very, very first time. This morning I am delivering my maiden address.

I represent residents in the spectacular riding of Flamborough—Glanbrook.

Interjection.

Ms. Donna Skelly: It is. It's a terrific riding, a unique riding that includes both urban and rural components. It's a vibrant, diverse riding, with a vibrant and diverse economy. The agriculture sector in Flamborough—Glanbrook contributes almost \$2 billion annually to Hamilton's local economy. We have one of Ontario's busiest cargo airports. We have strong industrial parts and a booming residential sector. People from right across the GTHA have discovered the beauty of my riding and are flooding to our riding to build a home and to raise their families.

Flamborough—Glanbrook is also home to Flamboro Downs, and hundreds and hundreds of people who make a living in the horse race industry—or at least they used to make a living in the horse race industry. Perhaps one of the ugliest outcomes of the past 15 years of Liberal waste and mismanagement is the devastation that has been levelled on the horse race industry.

The previous Liberal government cancelled the Slots at Racetracks Program, and they knew it would cost 23,000 jobs and result in the death of 27,000 horses. That move has devastated the industry, an industry made up of hard-working men and women. Training centres have shuttered and family farms have been sold, all because of this decision. Shame.

1010

Flamborough—Glanbrook is a massive riding that stretches from Niagara to Burlington, from Cambridge to the southern part of Hamilton Mountain. It includes many, many interesting historic communities, such as Stoney Creek, a community first inhabited by First Nations people and later explored by French-Canadian fur traders before being settled by Loyalists fleeing the American Revolution in the late 1700s. Binbrook is a community with a rich history of agriculture dating back

to 1791. Rockton is home to the famous Rockton World's Fair. The fair, which is hosted every Thanksgiving weekend, has been going on for 166 years. Lynden is the birthplace of David Forsyth, who many of you probably haven't heard of. He is celebrated as the father of Canadian soccer and formed the Western Football—or soccer—Association in Berlin, Ontario, back in 1880. It is considered one of the oldest soccer associations in the world. The historic village of Waterdown comes alive every summer with the ever-expanding ArtsFest. It's a music festival. Carlisle, Greenville, Mount Hope and Troy are just a few of the charming towns and villages that form my riding.

I treasure all that Flamborough—Glanbrook has to offer, but more importantly, I appreciate its people, the men and women who put their trust in me to represent their interests at Queen's Park.

As I was canvassing during the campaign, voters were telling me about their frustrations with the economy. They are worried about job security. They are worried about whether their children will find a well-paying job. They are angry about hydro bills that cost as much, in many cases, as a monthly car payment. They were concerned about how much more a carbon tax would add to their expenses. They are furious about the years of wasteful spending by the previous government. Many of the people I spoke to at the door told me that, for them, times are sometimes pretty tough. They're struggling to pay their bills.

I was born in Sudbury, Ontario. I grew up in the nearby town of Capreol, which is part of the Nickel Belt. I was raised in a blue-collar family and, like many of my neighbours, money was tight. Every summer, my mother would take me, my brother, Doug, and my sister, Sharon, to the little bush outside the little community to pick blueberries. We filled containers as fast as our fingers could pick them—cups and baskets. There were two things we had to be careful of when we picked berries. One was eating them, because, believe me, when you start picking a blueberry and you—you just never finish filling the basket. The other, of course, was bears. We often ran into bears.

Capreol was a railroad town, and that gave us a captive market for the berries. Every day, after picking them, we would clean them and then head down to the train station and sell them to the passengers who were heading either to Toronto or out west to Vancouver. It was my very first job, and I was probably about seven years old.

I had amazing role models in my life. Two of the most influential were women.

My mother taught me humility and the value of hard work. At the age of 37, I watched her swallow her pride as she walked into our local high school and to sit in a classroom with children the same age as her oldest daughter. She wanted to get her high school diploma, and she did. Her efforts were the catalyst for the very first adult education program launched in our town.

It wasn't easy. She was often teased. But the kids who teased her later showed up at our house and asked her to

help them, and she did. She ended up teaching them in later years, and she ended up becoming an executive assistant to senior managers at hospitals and private corporations.

I didn't know it at the time, but my grandmother was really the very first feminist in my life. She was this tiny, little soul who raised 10 children, including my mother.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you very much. It is now 10:15.

To the member from Flamborough—Glanbrook: You will have an opportunity when we resume again to finish your debate and your speech.

Debate deemed adjourned.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): It is now 10:15. This House stands recessed until 10:30.

The House recessed from 1015 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Faisal Hassan: I would like to welcome to Queen's Park our page Eric's parents, Janet Churchill and Dirk Albishausen, and their friends, April Stevens and her son Julian Wells. Welcome.

Mr. Amarjot Sandhu: I'd like to introduce my good friend and one of the key members in my campaign team, Connor Byrne. Welcome to the Legislature.

M^{me} Nathalie Des Rosiers: J'aimerais accueillir à Queen's Park Lauren Callighen. She's visiting for question period today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Robert Bailey: I'd like to introduce two guests and colleagues of mine: my son, Rodney Bailey, here from Sarnia—Lambton; and accompanying him, Andrew Esser from the riding of Sarnia—Lambton as well.

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: I want to introduce some of my constituents who are here visiting today: Dr. Amritpal Saini from the Innisfil Veterinary Hospital; Parvin Saini; and Bilawal Saini. Thank you very much for coming today.

Mr. David Piccini: I'd like to introduce two friends of mine from Port Hope, Darren Strongman and Debi Strongman, who are visiting. Darren just set me up this past weekend—he's our deputy police chief in Port Hope. I know we all appreciate their service. He set me up with a great ride-along. I thoroughly enjoyed that and would recommend it for everyone else.

Hon. Victor Fedeli: I have a guest from my home riding of Nipissing here: my very good friend and returning guest Ishmael Van Derassel.

DECORUM IN CHAMBER

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Before I ask for oral questions, I wish to address the House.

Standing order 13 confers upon the Speaker the responsibility to preserve order and decorum and to regulate debate in the interests of the House, accomplishing its work in a civil manner.

As Speaker, I am but one of 124 members, and you elected me to this role. The Speaker needs every member's assistance. Each of you is as much a part of the Chair as the Speaker is a part of the membership of the House. This is our House, all of us together, and we must accept the responsibility to do our work here in a manner that respects not only the traditions and customs of this place and the rules of the assembly, but also each other, as well as the democratic election that sent each of us here.

I ask you once again: Always address your remarks to the Chair, not to another member directly. Refer to other members in the third person, always using only the name of their electoral district or their parliamentary title.

Temperance of language is the hallmark of effective debate, and I know that members wish to see that as much as I do.

I would add, of course, that the Speaker has the power to name members. I've been reluctant to do that, because that means that the member who has been named effectively loses their voice in the House for the day, and their constituents are thus silenced for the day in terms of parliamentary debate. However, I will name members if need be, based on if their behaviour becomes unacceptable, but I will first issue a warning—one warning. If you've been warned, if I have to speak to you again, be assured: You will be named.

I hope that's clear.

ORAL QUESTIONS

MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, my first question is to the Acting Premier. Why, throughout the entire election campaign, did the Premier not once talk about his plan to rip up Toronto's wards, cancel regional elections and take power away from millions of voters?

Hon. Christine Elliott: To the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon. Steve Clark: Speaker, through you to the Leader of the Opposition: I think our government for the people was very clear during the election that resulted in us becoming the government of Ontario. We made it very clear and our Premier made it very clear that we were going to respect taxpayers' dollars, that we were going to work to reduce the size and the cost of government.

We believe very strongly that our Better Local Government Act will provide that for the citizens of Toronto by streamlining their council, by having 25 members of council. We believe that having them use the same jurisdictions their federal MPs and their provincial MPPs use is good.

I believe that a streamlined government will make quicker decisions, and those 25 members will be able to focus on the priorities for the citizens of Toronto. I believe that it is good public policy.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The people of Ontario care about their local democracy. They care about their local democracy. Long-time Conservative voters care about their local democracy. They're passionate about defending the autonomy and independence of Ontario's municipalities.

Respect for the rights of voters is something that unites Ontarians across political stripes and across our vast geography. So why is the Premier showing so much disrespect for people who want to have a say in how their city is run?

Hon. Steve Clark: Again, Speaker, through you to the Leader of the Opposition: I believe our party was very clear. Our Premier was crystal clear during the election that we were not only going to respect taxpayers' dollars, but we would always try to look to see how we can be more efficient and how local government can provide more effective programming to their citizens.

This is exactly the core of the bill that is on the order paper in my name. We believe very strongly that a council of 25 will be able to provide those streamlined, quick decisions that will be able to deal with the priorities of the citizens of Toronto. There will be no more gridlock on council after that bill is passed.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Every Canadian cares deeply about our democracy—every Canadian. No matter what our differences, all Ontarians believe that people should decide how they are governed.

That's why this Premier's behaviour is so shocking. By bullying his way into municipal elections, ripping up Toronto's wards and cancelling regional chair elections, he is showing zero respect for Ontarians.

Why is this Premier abusing the powers of his office to deny voters the respect that they deserve?

Hon. Steve Clark: Again, Speaker, through you to the Leader of the Opposition: This proposed bill will make Toronto council more efficient and, as a result, will save them, over the course of the four-year term, \$25 million. Again, it speaks to what we talked about during the campaign, the fact that we want smaller government and we want to be able to respect taxpayers' dollars.

I disagree fundamentally with the conversation about democracy. I want to remind the Leader of the Opposition that as of 8 a.m., the Toronto Star reader poll shows that 69% of people who responded say that our proposal will save money and will be good for democracy—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. Restart the clock. Next question.

MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also for the Acting Premier—but of course, it's not about the numbers, it's about how you get to change. Democracy demands that people are involved in the change, Speaker. That's the problem.

1040

The Premier of this incredible province should be supporting and cultivating local democracy. He should be doing everything he can to encourage new and diverse voices to come to the table and shape the future of all of our communities. But instead of doing the right thing, this Premier is undermining our democracy. He's trying to interfere in Toronto's election so he can control the city from the Premier's office.

Why is the Premier taking the power out of the hands of the people and putting more power in his own hands?

Hon. Christine Elliott: To the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon. Steve Clark: I want to thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question.

Our government is committed to putting accountability and trust back into government. It should come as no surprise to Ontarians that we talked over and over in the campaign about reducing the size and cost of government, about making government—no matter what level, whether it be our level or local government—more efficient and more effective.

We believe, on this side of the House, that our member municipalities provide vital services to their constituents—very, very important services for their constituents. I believe that it's in all of our interests to ensure that they do it in a way that's the most efficient and respects the taxpayer.

Again, I believe that the components of our bill that are before the House, if it's passed, will make sure we have better local government. I again ask that the Leader of the Opposition consider changing her tack and supporting our—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I would suggest that the minister not hold his breath, Speaker, because I believe in protecting and upholding democratic processes.

To that end, running an entire election campaign with a hidden agenda is fundamentally at odds with our democracy; cancelling elections is at odds with who we are as Ontarians; and ripping up Toronto's wards after years of public consultation is nothing more than the petty act of a man taking revenge on people who he disagrees with. It is not the behaviour of a Premier; it is the behaviour of a bully.

Why is the Premier imposing his own hidden agenda on the people of Ontario and refusing to act like a leader?

Hon. Steve Clark: Again, Speaker, through you to the Leader of the Opposition: An oversized council makes it almost impossible to make those streamlined decisions that are in Torontonians' best interests. We believe that the only way to provide that meaningful consensus is to have a situation where in this city, you would have 25 federal MPs representing constituencies—the same constituencies that have 25 MPPs presently—and now the bill would have those same 25 city councillors in those same constituencies.

Having a streamlined council that on October 22 can make those quick decisions, can fulfill those priorities of

the citizens of this city—I think that is the way to go. It should, again, come as no surprise. We talked over and over and over again, Speaker, about making sure that taxpayers' dollars are respected. Again, smaller—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you.

Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Look, the Premier's assault on local democracy won't help anyone but the Premier, and it will make it harder for the citizens of Toronto to get the services and supports that they need.

This plot is all about the Premier taking revenge on his opponents. It's all about the Premier controlling city council from the Premier's office. As Councillor Mammoliti said, it's all about purging progressives off council and helping right-wingers take control of Toronto.

Why is the Premier hiding behind bluster and distraction when he should have the courage to tell the people exactly what it is that he's up to?

Hon. Steve Clark: Again, Speaker, I want to thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question.

Our proposed legislation will not only solve a problem with the municipal government, the fact that they're so tied up in gridlock in their decision-making process; it's also, as I've said in this House before, the issue of voter parity.

The member opposite wants to quote a councillor; I'll quote one as well. Councillor Justin Di Ciano had some excellent remarks on the subject on Friday at a press conference where he said, "The ridings do not belong to the councillors; they belong to Torontonians. There is a massive improvement—over a million Torontonians who will now have a fairer vote because of the decision made this morning." That's his quote.

Again, Speaker, through you to the Leader of the Opposition, there are many councillors. There is a large constituency out there that believes that having a smaller, more—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. Start the clock. Next question.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The next question is for the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services. For 20 years, people across Ontario have been fighting to fix the damage that the last Conservative government did to social assistance. Now, instead of fixing the problems and helping everyone live with dignity, this minister is making the problems even worse. The Conservatives are slashing the planned social assistance increase by half and denying people the raises that they were promised. Why is this minister cutting social assistance in a callous attempt to save money on the backs of the most vulnerable?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: I thank the leader of the official opposition for her question. I disagree with the premise.

We have been very clear. We have inherited a patchwork system that is dysfunctional, that is in a mess.

What we have said is that we are going to have a 1.5% increase in social assistance rates, in ODSP and Ontario Works across the board, as we hit pause on the irresponsible plan put forward by the previous Liberal government. What we have said is that we will have action in 100 days, so we can lift more people up, get them back into the workforce where that's possible and provide them with the necessary support they so desperately need. We will lead this process with compassion, and we will ensure that we have better outcomes for the people who we represent across all of Ontario.

I look forward to your supplementary question, so I can talk a little bit more about our plan.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, Speaker, by slashing social assistance increases and cancelling the Basic Income Pilot, the minister is punishing people and pushing them into deeper poverty. The Income Security Advocacy Centre says that the Premier's cut will steal \$150 million out of the hands of the poorest people in our province. They say there is absolutely nothing compassionate about what this minister is doing, and I completely agree with income security advocates across Ontario who are appalled and incredibly disappointed.

How can this minister stand here and do the dirty work of a Premier who's attacking the most vulnerable people in Ontario?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: The leader of the official opposition would rather us continue to pile onto a very broken system that is disadvantaging many people. She and I spent many years in the opposition together, and many questions and many committees with the Auditor General.

But let me be very clear: I had a good meeting on Sunday and an even better one on Monday with the Auditor General. The Auditor General told me that Ontario Works and Ontario disability supports have lots of challenges. In fact, the previous administration refused to implement some of those recommendations that would have improved the system for better outcomes for people.

We're going to act expeditiously. I've given my ministry 100 days as we hit the pause button and, under compassionate grounds, have asked and received from cabinet a 1.5% increase for all those folks on social assistance. We're going to get more people back on track. We're going to lift them up, and we're going to start with compassion.

But I really reject the dog whistle politics that continue—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you. Stop the clock. I would ask the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services to withdraw the unparliamentary remark.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: Sorry, Speaker. I withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Next question.

ANTI-RACISM ACTIVITIES

Mr. Kaleed Rasheed: My question is for the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. Yesterday, I was deeply disappointed by the actions of one of the members of the official opposition in this House. Mr. Speaker, our government for the people includes members from diverse races, faiths and backgrounds.

The government has chosen to honour the people of Ontario by continuing House proceedings today. I'm proud to stand here today and state that our government for the people will not tolerate hate or racism of any kind, and it has no place within this Legislature.

1050

As the minister responsible for the Anti-Racism Directorate, could the minister please explain the position of this government on hate and racism in Ontario?

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: Thank you to the member from Mississauga East-Cooksville for the important question that he just gave me. I'd also like to congratulate the member on his election to the Legislature.

As the member stated, our government is for the people and it includes every person in this great province. I was absolutely shocked and disgusted by the comments made by the member of the official opposition in this Legislature during yesterday's question period. Ontario is an inclusive province, where all are respected no matter their background, nationality, faith or race.

As a second-generation Canadian—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm going to ask the member to withdraw the charge that he made.

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: Withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm going to ask the member to withdraw.

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: Withdraw, yes.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Withdrawn.

Supplementary?

Mr. Kaleed Rasheed: Through you, Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for his response to this important topic. I feel proud knowing that our government for the people is taking the initiative to combat hate and racism within this province and to know that this government is committed to taking hate and racism seriously. It is without question that our government for the people will not tolerate hate and will be sure to remain committed to our priorities of listening and serving all of the great people of this province.

Mr. Speaker, given the extremely inappropriate remarks made yesterday by a member of this Legislature—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm going to ask the member to withdraw.

Mr. Kaleed Rasheed: Withdraw.

Could the minister please explain how he's combating racism and hate within this great province?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. Start the clock. Minister?

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: Again, I want to thank the member for this important question. I want to ensure all members of this House that my ministry is responsible for overseeing the Anti-Racism Directorate. It's continuing to fulfill its mandate and it's working on the basis of a whole-of-government approach to addressing systemic racism.

Anti-racism is a proactive process of removing systemic barriers that seek to identify, remedy and prevent racial inequities. It is an investment in human capital and the province's economic future. Our goal is to ensure opportunities are available to everyone, creating a healthier society and a stronger economy—a better Ontario for all.

Again, Mr. Speaker, there is simply no place for hate in Ontario or within the walls of this Legislature. Our government for the people will continue taking this important issue seriously.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: My question is to the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services. Yesterday the Conservative government announced that they were slashing already-meagre social assistance rates for people living in poverty and those with disabilities. This mean-spirited and callous decision unfairly targets the most vulnerable members of our communities. It lacks compassion, empathy and shows a complete disdain for people living in poverty.

We know there are problems with the system and how it functions, but it should be obvious to everyone that slashing rate increases in half is simply not how you help vulnerable people.

Speaker, does the minister really believe that people receiving social assistance will be better off with a cut to their already-below-poverty-level income?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: Thank you to the member for the question. I will note that we are actually moving forward with a 1.5% increase across the board for ODSP and Ontario Works. We have made that decision on compassionate grounds as we hit the pause button on a previous plan put forward by the Liberal government, which was unsustainable. It was a mess. It was disjointed. It was a patchwork. We could have cherry-picked certain things, but I think that would have been irresponsible, because we would have been building on top of an already broken system.

What we have said is that we are going to set ourselves up for success by putting forward a plan in the next 100 days, and we will come back to the people of Ontario with a plan that will lift people up, that will bring dignity back to the system, that will ensure that people can get back to work where they can and, where they can't, that they have a strong, sustainable social safety net for themselves.

I look forward to the supplemental.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: Back to the minister: The minister said yesterday that they need 100 days to figure out

this system and set it right, but the studies have been done and the results are already in. Over a year's worth of work went into producing the Income Security: A Roadmap for Change report, which was submitted to the government last fall. In it, the working groups laid out substantial recommendations for Ontario's income security system, including a rate increase of 5% a year. Speaker, I have a copy of the report. I'm happy to send it to the minister so she can familiarize herself with it.

Will the minister call off her redundant 100-day fishing expedition and accept the results of the Roadmap for Change?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: The short answer, obviously, is no. It wasn't working. The system wasn't working under the previous Liberal administration. It was dysfunctional. It's a mess.

The first days I was the minister responsible, I had massive briefings, because I inherited five ministries. Did you know, Speaker, that social assistance, poverty reduction and other ways to help people were spread over a number of different ministries, rather than being repatriated into one area? As a result, the Basic Income Pilot project people weren't speaking with the poverty reduction people, who weren't speaking with the social assistance people.

I think I owe it to Ontarians and this government owes it to Ontarians to make sure that we're speaking to everybody within these various departments to put forward a sustainable plan to help people get back on track, and that's what we're going to do in the next 100 days.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. Order. Restart the clock.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Mrs. Nina Tangri: My question is for the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services, with responsibility for immigration and women's issues. Minister, as I listened to your announcement from yesterday afternoon and reviewed your news release to learn more about the Ontario social safety net, our social assistance programs and in particular Ontario Works and the Ontario Disability Support Program, I was dismayed by the current situation with real growth in the number of longer-term recipients and the fact that the growth in the social assistance caseload has been greater than the rate of population growth over the last 15 years.

I was also quite disappointed to hear that there is real growth in the number of people who are on Ontario Works for more than five years. I had believed that Ontario Works is a short-term, helping-hand program. How can this be true if recipients are on the program for more than five years?

I have also come to learn that of those who get themselves off the program—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you. Response?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: I thank the honourable member for her question. As I indicated, one of the first things that I did when I became the new minister responsible for social services was to review the social assistance program that our government inherited, and this is what we found—and I must be clear: This is not a fun job. This is a tough job, but we need to make sure that we have the right outcomes for people.

I'm just going to read to you a few things. One in five people stay on Ontario Works for more than five years. That's not fair to the people who would really prefer to have a job, which is the best social program. The number of single people using the program grew by 57% in the last 15 years. There's a cycle of poverty that we have to get people out of in this province. That's the right thing to do. When people leave the program, almost half of them return, 90% in the first year alone. That's not fair to people in need, and that's why we're going to set a target in the next 100 days to get people back on track in this province.

Interjections.

1100

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock.

Start the clock. Supplementary?

Mrs. Nina Tangri: Thank you very much, Minister, for that response. I do feel better knowing that this government is focused on solutions and that this government is focused on objectives. Certainly we should measure compassion by the outcomes and the motivation rather than measuring them in dollars and cents. I also appreciate that you have been quite forthright about the speed with which you will develop a plan for the future.

I understand from your announcement and news release that the social assistance plan that coordinates the many programs you now oversee in the new Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services is your key focus. I also understand that you would rather front-line staff spend time helping to stabilize recipients and helping recipients to see a path to success, than spending their time on paperwork.

Minister, do you feel the Liberal social assistance programs are trapping too many people in the cycle of dependence? Can you please tell this House about the plan you and your officials are working on?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: It was actually a very important question. As somebody who grew up in a very small rural town in Nova Scotia, I saw the effects of poverty, and I saw the effects of a good job and how that brought dignity to people. That's certainly where we want to start.

What we're going to do with our 100-day plan is to have equal measures of head and heart. We're going to lead with compassion and we're going to lead with objectives to get more people back on track and help them get sorted out.

But I want to address one of the points that my colleague mentioned about the administration. My staff in the field—and I was able to go and visit many of my staff in Ottawa—are spending between 75% to 90% of their time on administration rather than setting people up with

life skills and mentoring them. If we want to talk about compassion, we actually have to lead with compassion and make sure we treat people with dignity and respect and give them a path forward, not like what the previous Liberal administration did in making sure they were stuck in poverty.

CURRICULUM

Ms. Jill Andrew: Good morning, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Education.

The youth of Ontario, many of whom actually went through the public education system with the outdated, out-of-touch 1998 curriculum, are demanding that the 2015 curriculum be back in classrooms, Minister. Listen to their voices. They're calling to put a stop to this regressive and dangerous move. They won't settle for you not answering their questions and they know—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Sorry to interrupt, but I would ask again that the members make their questions through the Chair.

Ms. Jill Andrew: —and they know this government's mythical 2014 curriculum does not exist.

Will the minister finally listen to and respect the students of Ontario, who are telling this government that the 1998 curriculum is not enough to keep them safe from homophobia, transphobia, gender-based violence, sexual assault and appearance-based bullying in the classroom and online?

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: First of all, I would like to say to the member opposite that I was very pleased to see her join us in Ottawa last week as she participated in the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians conference as well as the CPA conference. I really appreciated that you were there, and you raised your voice very well. Thank you.

With regard to how we're moving forward in the fall, I have to impress upon everyone that we've made our position very clear. Teachers will be using the curriculum last used in 2014. To the member opposite, I would like to say: Please work with me and ensure that the students you spoke of raise their voices and participate in the fulsome consultation that we will be hosting this fall. That is where they will have a forum to share how they feel and what they feel is important to pursue in terms of paths forward.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary question?

Ms. Jill Andrew: Through you, Mr. Speaker: Minister, our students need consultation. September is too late. Students will already be back in class. Teachers will be left without a curriculum framework that has any relevance to the world kids live in today. Parents in Toronto—St. Paul's tell me they just cannot do this work alone. They need teachers to be equipped with the modernized 2015 curriculum.

Will this government engage with Ontario's youth, or are they only interested in consulting with their right-wing extremist friends?

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: I have to share with you that we're going to be engaging with every single person who wants to be heard with regard to the path we're going to pursue as we move forward. And until then, we are going to use the curriculum that was last used in 2014.

Speaker, I have to share with you that I can't wait—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The opposition will come to order.

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: —to kick off this consultation. I invite every member in this House to join me so that we have a fulsome consultation that enables every single person, be it a student, be it a parent, be it a teacher, be it a concerned community member—because we are committed to this consultation.

I have to remind everyone in this House that the premise of this is because we had a former Liberal government that totally ignored the concerns of parents. Just like the federal NDP leader said, we're going to respect our parents and consult with them and everyone else.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Mr. Mike Schreiner: My question is for the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services. Conservative economist Milton Friedman was an early promoter of a basic income guarantee because he felt it was a small-government, non-bureaucratic solution to eliminate poverty. Former Conservative Senator Hugh Segal designed the basic income guarantee policy to promote fairness and to help eliminate poverty. During the last election campaign, a Conservative spokesperson said the PC government would continue the Basic Income Pilot.

I participated in a debate with the Deputy Premier. She confirmed that the pilot would continue. Yet, yesterday, the minister announced that the Basic Income Pilot would be cancelled.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, to the minister: Why did your party make a promise to keep the Basic Income Pilot during the campaign and break your promise yesterday?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: Thank you very much to the leader of the Green Party. It's a pleasure to take a question from you and welcome your historic win here in the House. This is my first opportunity to say that.

Look, this ministry is about making some tough decisions because we've been left with some very difficult challenges. Immediately after being selected as the minister responsible, I looked at the research project as a model and I was informed by many in my ministry that this kind of program really does not support people becoming independent contributors to the economy, to their families and to the community. We need a system that is not only cost-effective—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order. The official opposition will come to order.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: —but incentivizes people to get back to work. When it incentivizes them, we need to make sure that they are not penalized for income inequality.

We would rather, right now, invest in building a system of social services that is more affordable for the province, but also more successful for those who require support.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Mike Schreiner: Through you, Mr. Speaker, to the minister: Thank you for the kind words welcoming me to the Legislature—

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: And to my office.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: And into your old office, absolutely.

Mr. Speaker, I agree that Ontario's social assistance system is broken. This is exactly why we need a basic income guarantee pilot to study how to fix the system. Numerous economists from across the political spectrum—left, right, centre—have all agreed that a Basic Income Pilot is an effective way to create a small-government solution to solving poverty.

So through you, Mr. Speaker, to the minister: Can you provide an economic analysis detailing why the ministry decided that the Basic Income Pilot was not effective and share that with members of the Legislature?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: I thank the honourable member for his question.

Look, our government will be doing a line-by-line audit that will be made available in due course. But let's get back to the point. We, in the early days of this government, found that we had a patchwork, dysfunctional system to eradicate poverty in Ontario, which social assistance and basic income should be part of. So we made a tough decision, a decision that is going to be right for the people, but it was a difficult decision to make.

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Over the next hundred days, we are going to develop an affordable, responsible plan to help people who are on the Basic Income Pilot project to get back to work, to get back to school, to find themselves an opportunity to lift themselves up out of the cycle of poverty that we've seen over the past 15 years.

I would point out, as somebody who has raised tens of thousands of pounds of food for food cupboards in my home community, that there's a greater reliance today of people using food banks, and there's a greater reliance of people needing affordable housing and there's a greater reliance of people who need homeless shelters, and that's a result of 15 years of mismanagement.

TAXATION

Mr. David Piccini: Good morning, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks.

During the election, Ontario families spoke out against cap-and-trade, Ontario businesses spoke out against cap-

and-trade and this government listened. The former Liberal government made Ontario closed for business with this punitive tax and many other measures.

However, last week, the minister introduced Bill 4, an act to wind down the cap-and-trade program. Our approach is different, Mr. Speaker. Our approach is an approach based on what is in the best interests of Ontario families and businesses. Can the Minister of the Environment let Ontario families and businesses know what kind of relief they can expect from our government?

Hon. Rod Phillips: Through you, Mr. Speaker, I thank the member from Northumberland–Peterborough South. I appreciate the question.

While the federal government continues with their plan to impose a job-killing carbon tax, we on this side of the Legislature have been clear that Ontario will proceed with a plan to cut taxes, create jobs and encourage growth. Yesterday we began debate on Bill 4, the Cap and Trade Cancellation Act, which will put an end to the carbon tax era in Ontario.

I would like to thank the members from Barrie–Innisfil and from Cambridge for standing up for their constituents and speaking in favour of the bill—I see her seating has improved, no doubt as a result of her speech. They understand that the legislation will make life more affordable for all Ontarians.

This legislation includes a real commitment to a made-in-Ontario environmental plan that will tackle climate change but not through a regressive, job-killing tax. Furthermore, we will create 8,000 jobs through this plan and save Ontario families \$260 each and every year.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. David Piccini: I thank the honourable minister for his answer. Thank you for listening to the people, Minister. Promise made—

Interjections: —promise kept.

Mr. David Piccini: I know that after years of un-kept promises, years of false promises, it truly offends the sensibilities of the members opposite to see this government delivering not on their agenda but on our agenda.

We're going to stay true to our promises, Mr. Speaker, because we know—

Interjection.

Mr. David Piccini: You'll have your turn.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Leader of the Opposition will please come to order.

Mr. David Piccini: We know that if the opposition had their way, we would increase gas prices by 35 cents a litre, crippling small families in Ontario.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, that is not true.

Mr. David Piccini: Their member said that lowering gas prices was reckless, Mr. Speaker—was reckless.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I ask the member for Niagara Falls to withdraw.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I withdraw.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I withdraw, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Leader of the Opposition, you have to stand up and withdraw.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I withdraw, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you.

We have a few more seconds. Please put your question.

Mr. David Piccini: [*inaudible*], Speaker. Can the minister let us know how this government will make Ontario competitive, while recognizing the challenges of climate change?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Point of order.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I will hear your point of order after question period.

Minister, response?

Hon. Rod Phillips: I thank the member for the question. It's quite clear where this side of the Legislature stands, but with the NDP, you just never know. Yesterday, the NDP member from Timmins held a press conference. He was introducing what he calls the Fairness in Petroleum Products Pricing Act, advocating for stricter rules protecting consumers from higher gas prices.

Now, while this may or may not be a good idea, yesterday in this House, Mr. Speaker, NDP members stood and spoke in opposition to actually reducing gas prices by 4.5 cents a litre and 5.5 cents for diesel fuel. In contrast, we have been very clear. We have said what we will do, not empty promises.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. Restart the clock.

Next question.

MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Canadian democracy is built on a foundation of laws and customs. Since Confederation, Ontario has developed customs and common practices that have led to a more meaningful and robust democracy.

The vindictive actions taken by this Conservative government toward the people of Toronto violate a long-standing custom to not interfere in local government elections. The government's actions are nothing short of an affront to our democracy.

Why has this government so wilfully violated our democratic institutions for political gain?

Hon. Steve Clark: Through you, Speaker, to the member, we're taking decisive action so that on October 22 the people of Toronto will have a streamlined council that can make those quick decisions, but in the best interests of taxpayers. Local government, as I've said many times, delivers very critical services. But I have to say to the member that bigger councils are not necessarily better councils.

Again, it should come as no surprise to the member that we're looking at having a more efficient and more effective government.

My officials are working with the staff at the city of Toronto to deal with the changing of the nomination dates included in the bill, from July 27 to September 14. I want to assure the member and this House that the elections will continue on October 22. We're working with the city of Toronto. We're working with—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Again to the minister: Even children in elementary school learning about government for the first time understand that free and fair elections are a cornerstone of any democracy, but this government seems to be struggling with that concept.

It is anti-democratic to cancel elections. It is anti-democratic to alter elections while they're in full swing. And it is anti-democratic to do all this without consulting anyone. The fact that only certain municipalities that the Premier has a personal grudge against are targeted by these anti-democratic moves is even more chilling.

Why is protecting the Premier's ego more important than upholding democratic institutions that he is supposed to protect?

Hon. Steve Clark: Again, Speaker, through you to the member, our party and our Premier were very clear during the election. We talked every day of the campaign about respecting taxpayers' dollars and about reducing the size and cost of government.

I want to again remind the member that a bigger council doesn't mean it's a better council. I believe quite strongly in having a system where you have that one electoral boundary, where you're able to look at a constituent and say there's one MP, there's one MPP and there's one city councillor.

On October 22 there will be an election in the city of Toronto. It will provide a more streamlined council that can make those quick decisions, but very important decisions. I think it's going to be a better council. It's going to be a better decision-making process. This bill will result in better local government.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. Start the clock.

Next question.

TAXATION

Ms. Christine Hogarth: My question is for the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks. Today the federal government has finally come to terms with the ineffectiveness of their planned carbon tax. This tax, as we have said, is detrimental to the Canadian economy and does not have the best interests of Canadian businesses in mind. If passed, the federal government's revision of their carbon tax will reduce what Canadian businesses will have to pay by 10%.

Minister, through the Speaker: How will this revision of the federal carbon tax aid Canadian businesses and bolster the broader Canadian economy while providing relief for Ontario families?

Hon. Rod Phillips: I thank the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore for her question.

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This government was elected on a mandate to put people first and make life more affordable for families in Ontario. This includes our commitment to scrap the cap-and-trade carbon tax, which we are in the process of doing with Bill 4. Our promise was clear.

But as the member also mentioned—and this was news to all of us this morning—following a series of closed-door meetings between industry officials and the federal government, the federal government has signalled a reduction in their planned carbon tax. The fact is, this climb-down by the federal government is a signal that we have been right all along.

While I'm pleased to see that the Prime Minister has started to acknowledge the severe economic impacts of a job-killing carbon tax, I'll continue to say, and this government will continue to say, that we oppose a carbon tax in any form and/or in any size.

If the federal government continues to pursue a carbon tax to punish Ontario families and make Ontario businesses uncompetitive, we will oppose—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock.

Start the clock. Supplementary?

Ms. Christine Hogarth: Thank you very much, Minister. I'm happy to see that Justin Trudeau woke up this morning and smelled the coffee. I'm happy that he realized the negative effects of this tax on the economy, Canadian businesses and Canadian families.

The reduced tax means businesses will have fewer costs to pass along to consumers and will face less competitive pressure. Automakers are already facing difficulty in maintaining jobs and investment in Canada and cannot afford sharply higher carbon taxes.

I'm proud to say that our government is keeping our promises and moving past the previous Liberal government's obsession with raising taxes. Instead, we're creating opportunity to usher in a new era of economically prudent and effective environmental action that will protect Ontario families.

Minister, through the Speaker: My question is, why do you think Mr. Trudeau and the Liberals rolled back their carbon tax scheme?

Hon. Rod Phillips: Mr. Speaker, through you to the member: Clearly the federal Liberal Party and Mr. Trudeau are starting to hear the message from Ontario employers and from businesses across Canada that a carbon tax will make them less competitive.

It's also perhaps a coincidence that an Ipsos poll released just a few weeks ago found that 72% of Canadians thought that a carbon tax was nothing more than a cash grab. That's why we are committed to using all the tools that we have available, including all the tools in the courts, to oppose the federal government's carbon tax.

We did not fight a campaign to eliminate cap-and-trade just to have a job-killing carbon tax imposed. The

carbon-tax era in Ontario is over. Promise made, promise kept.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Ms. Sandy Shaw: My question is for the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services. This Premier cuts local government in half and calls it "more representation." The Premier ends environmental protections and calls it "conservation." This government acts cruelly and calls it "compassion."

Mr. Speaker, I've heard the minister twice this morning say that they are going to be hitting the pause button. It's quite a callous comment, because people cannot hit the pause button on their lives. In fact, I would suggest that it's actually a rewind button, taking this province back decades.

My question, Mr. Speaker, is that given that the decision announced yesterday to end the Basic Income Pilot before any evidence is in can only be seen as punitive, why, without any evidence, is this Conservative government ending the Basic Income Pilot project?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: I thank the honourable member for her question. I understand it will be difficult for her because her community is impacted.

First, I just want to say thanks to the people who took that leap of faith and joined the project. I know it took a lot of courage for people to do that, and I will commit that we will take a thoughtful and responsible approach as we wind down.

But let me talk a little bit about the research. I have a ministry, I have bureaucrats and I have staff that are monitoring this, and I am told that this program isn't working. It's actually disincentivizing people from working. It's disincentivizing them from lifting themselves up.

I appreciate the member opposite's question, but our project research team will continue to be in place to support participants in the study. We'll have more to say on how we're going to wind this program down. I also want them to know that their payments will still be on time for the month of August, and I assure them that if they have any questions, I would be happy to take them as minister responsible for this area.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister: One of the country's most respected fiscal conservatives, Hugh Segal, whom I've had the pleasure of speaking with, recommended this particular form the pilot would take, so I presume that Mr. Segal is not in the backroom of Ford's hard-right Conservatives.

Since this pilot started, there have been testimonials from researchers around the world. It has—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Once again, I'm going to remind the members that you refer to other individual members in the third person, and you talk about their riding name or their parliamentary name.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: I apologize, Mr. Speaker. Yes.

Let me just quote some of the participants who are from my riding of Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas. A

woman said, "I don't feel so backed into a corner. If I want to eat, I can afford to buy something instead of going to a food bank." That's from Wendy Moore.

I would also like to quote Tom Cooper, the director of the Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction, who said, "I am angry on behalf of the ... Hamiltonians who were promised they could participate in this pilot project. They were sold a bill of goods" by the Tory government.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: Thanks very much, Speaker. Look, I will say this: The constant labelling by the opposition is not helpful to this debate. This is a very sensitive area. We had to hit the pause button because we inherited a disjointed, fragmented social assistance and poverty reduction strategy. These aren't easy decisions, but they are the right ones for better outcomes for the future of Ontarians and in order to make sure that they are more sustainable.

I would urge the member opposite, if she would like to have a conversation with me, to sit down and we will talk about how we can best get her residents back on track as we get out of this basic income research project. But I assure the member opposite that when we take our time, in the next 100 days, to outline a plan for the people of Ontario, there will be less people going to food banks. There will be more people getting back to work and there will be more people having a sense of optimism in the province of Ontario after 15 years of reckless Liberal spending and planning.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Billy Pang: My question is for the Minister of Infrastructure. After 15 long years of self-serving Liberal administration, the people of Ontario finally have a PC government, led by Premier Doug Ford, which is committing to bring prosperity and opportunity back to the province.

Yesterday, it was reported that Waterfront Toronto and Sidewalk Labs had entered into a plan development agreement to move forward with developing a high-tech neighbourhood with a people-first approach. That means well-paying jobs, affordable housing and urban innovation.

Can the minister please share with the House what this neighbourhood of the future will look like?

Hon. Monte McNaughton: I'd like to thank the member for Markham-Unionville for the great question here this morning.

Mr. Speaker, our government is pleased that Sidewalk Labs, an associate company of Google, has partnered with Waterfront Toronto to deliver modern, innovative infrastructure for the province of Ontario. Sidewalk Labs will be investing \$50 million to help create a master innovation and development plan for Quayside which will prioritize sustainability, affordability, mobility and economic opportunities. Further innovations will include data-driven processes to ensure energy efficiency and improve noise, traffic and pollution. Other areas for development and research will include high-speed Internet, machine learning and self-driving cars.

This is cutting-edge innovation that's going to likely lead to 5,000 new private sector jobs being created here in Toronto and in Ontario. Mr. Speaker, Ontario is open for business.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. Restart the clock.

Supplementary.

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Mr. Billy Pang: Back to the minister: Thank you for the great update. This development will certainly help send a signal that Ontario is open for business for all sectors and industries. Attracting a prominent company like Google to invest right here in Toronto is a sign of good things to come. I'm sure the rest of the world will be looking to Ontario to see the steps we are taking to promote innovation and sustainability in mixed-use neighbourhoods.

Can the minister tell this House how this investment fits into the broader vision of the province and what economic benefits it offers?

Hon. Monte McNaughton: Thank you to the member for the excellent follow-up question. Mr. Speaker, with great investments like this, it is no wonder that Toronto and Ontario continually rank as one of the top high-tech centres in the entire world.

The potential long-term economic benefits of moving forward with this specific development could include 5,000 new jobs, innovative solutions to urban issues, and fresh investments totalling billions and billions of dollars. It delivers on this government's and our Premier's commitment to attracting knowledge-based capital and investments to Ontario. We're going to continue to create and support high-paying jobs in the private sector and innovation in new high-tech sectors. Our message that Ontario is open for business will ring loud and clear.

Mr. Speaker, this new agreement is another way that our government is fulfilling our commitment to the people of Ontario. Promise made, promise kept.

CURRICULUM

Ms. Marit Stiles: My question is for the Minister of Education: 22 school boards across Ontario are standing up against this government's dangerous decision to force the 1998 sexual education curriculum back into Ontario's classrooms. From Durham to Simcoe county to Ottawa-Carleton, they've said in no uncertain terms that their priority will always be maintaining an inclusive and safe environment for their students. Wherever this government fails to protect Ontario kids, Mr. Speaker, these school boards will stand in.

Now this government is creating more chaos by demanding that Toronto boards shift their boundaries by August 14, or this government is going to impose them on them. Why are Ontario's school boards showing more leadership to the children of Ontario than this government?

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: I'm pleased to address this, because we need to ensure that the proper message gets out, and that is that we're keeping a campaign promise to respect parents, because from the last administration, we heard time and again that parents were totally left out in the field and not respected with regard to their feelings and their position on what was being taught in terms of the health and physical education curriculum.

Our position is very clear: Teachers are going to be using the curriculum that was last used in 2014, and we are going to be ensuring that every school board, every parent, every student, every person who wants to have their voice heard will be consulted. We invite the member opposite to participate in the forum that we'll be kicking off this fall.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary question.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Education refuses again to stand up for the students of this province. While this minister refuses to show leadership, we have chaos in our school boards.

School is back in just a few weeks. We have a Deputy Premier who has been flipping and flopping on this, saying that if a child has a question not covered in the irrelevant 1998 curriculum—you can call it “2014”; it's the 1998 curriculum—say, like cyberbullying, gender identity or consent, teachers should take them behind closed doors in private and talk directly to that child.

Interjection: Unbelievable.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Yes, that couldn't possibly go wrong.

Why does this government think it's appropriate for children to shoulder the responsibility of accepting an inclusive and relevant education? Do they see how this will further endanger our students?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Members will take their seats.

The Minister of Education.

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: Speaker, I have to tell you: I absolutely reject the spin that that member opposite is trying to generate—absolutely reject it. We are moving forward with a very thoughtful, comprehensive consultation that is going to move the health and physical education curriculum forward.

I look forward to kicking off this consultation this fall. Again, Speaker, I invite every single member in this House to be part of the solution, because we know the last Liberal administration totally disrespected parents. We're going to put our best foot forward to ensure that we respect people throughout this province and make sure that we have a curriculum that meets the needs and addresses social issues in a respectful way.

AGRICULTURE INDUSTRY

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: My question is for the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. First, I would like to congratulate the minister on his re-election and

appointment as minister. I know his experience in agriculture, both in politics and in the field, will serve him well in this role.

Mr. Speaker, there are many great agriculture products available across my riding of Carleton, including fruits, vegetables, honey, lamb, beef, chicken, eggs and dairy. Thanks to a private member's bill put forward by the minister when he was in opposition, I see many signs showing where Ontario-grown produce is available as I travel to events across Carleton.

This Saturday is Food Day Canada, an excellent opportunity to celebrate our agriculture industry and enjoy the great local food produced by our hard-working Ontario farmers.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister: What can Ontarians do to celebrate Food Day Canada in their communities and show our farmers how much they appreciate everything they do?

Hon. Ernie Hardeman: I'd like to thank the member for her question and congratulate her as well on her election. I know she will serve the constituents of Carleton well.

I also want to thank the residents of the great riding of Oxford for once again electing me to serve on their behalf here at Queen's Park.

Here in Ontario, we have a strong agri-food industry that produces many delicious products for consumers to enjoy. I encourage everyone to celebrate Food Day Canada and support our Ontario farmers and producers by looking for local food options. Our farmers and processors work hard every day to ensure consumers have access to high-quality and healthy food, and our government supports the agriculture industry.

Mr. Speaker, Ontario is open for business, and our agriculture industry is no different. Our government supports the agriculture sector, and I look forward to working with the agriculture community to reduce red tape and strengthen our agriculture industry.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: Thank you, Minister, for that answer.

Mr. Speaker, back to the minister: Ontario is open for business and I commend the minister for the work he has done to promote local food and produce in Ontario throughout his time in the Legislature.

I look forward to enjoying Food Day Canada this weekend with some delicious local food from producers in my riding, including Carleton Mushroom, SunTech tomatoes, Rideau Pines Farm, and Shouldice Berry Farm.

It was great to hear from the minister about how Ontarians can engage in Food Day Canada on Saturday, and I was encouraged to hear that the minister is working with the agriculture sector to strengthen the industry.

Mr. Speaker, through you: Minister, what else is your ministry doing to support our agriculture industry and our hard-working Ontario farmers who put fresh local food on our tables?

Hon. Ernie Hardeman: Thank you very much, again, to the member, for the question. It's been a very busy

first month as Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. During my first week as minister, I held an agriculture round table with representatives from many of Ontario's agricultural organizations and heard directly from the industry about the challenges they face.

I was able to attend the federal-provincial-territorial meeting of agriculture ministers, where I was proud to represent our government and share the interests of Ontario's agriculture industry with my counterparts from across the country and discuss how we can create more jobs and support economic growth in agriculture and the agri-food sector.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to continuing working with the agriculture community to support Ontario's farmers, rural communities and agri-businesses. Our government campaigned on a promise to support our farmers, and that's exactly what we're doing. Promises made, promises kept.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I want to thank the members for their co-operation in helping the Speaker ensure a more civil discussion this morning in question period.

MEMBER'S COMMENTS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Timmins on a point of order.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: On a point of order—it's exactly that point. It's pretty clear, with this new Premier's administration, that the temperature of the House and the tone of the House are very much changed. I want to refer—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Listen, I point out that the Premier's not here today. It's the best-behaved you've seen in a long time.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member knows full well he can't refer to the absence of another member. What's your point of order?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: My point is, under standing order 23, there are two parts of the standing order that are pretty topical to what happened this morning with the member from Northumberland—Peterborough South, and that is, first of all, you can't allege anything against another member under (h); but (k)—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: But under standing order 23(k), "Uses abusive or insulting language of a nature likely to create disorder," it was pretty clear what the member was trying to do.

I would ask that you would keep members in order. You did a pretty good job today, but I think members have to be on their guard—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The House will come to order.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Carleton will come to order. I'd ask the member for Carleton to withdraw.

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: I withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I would remind all members that inflammatory language is not helpful. It doesn't raise the tone of debate. It doesn't enhance the respect of the public—anybody who's watching, anybody who's visiting, anybody who's paying attention. We need to raise the bar, and intemperate language is not helpful.

The member is quite right: There are standing orders which prohibit accusations against other members. The Speaker is not in a position to be able to judge the merits of any of the accusations, but I would ask all members to refrain from doing that.

It is time now to recess the House. The House will resume this afternoon at 3 p.m.

The House recessed from 1142 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos: It's my pleasure to introduce some special guests who are with us today: Alexandros Ioannidis, the consul general of Greece in Toronto; Andonis Artemakis, the president of the Greek Community of Toronto; members of the board of directors of the Hellenic Heritage Foundation, Tula Alexopoulos, chair of the governance committee, Sandra Gionas, chair of the history committee, Helene Vassos, chair of the PR committee; and Chris Grafos, historian and co-founder of the Greek Canadian History Project at York University.

Ms. Natalia Kusendova: I'd like to welcome my good friend and mentor, Lieutenant Colonel Professor Walter Perchal, to the Legislature.

Mrs. Nina Tangri: I'd like to welcome one of my wonderful campaign team members here. I have Livon Mamiza and his sister Marian from our riding. Livon came to the country as a patient with spina bifida and had treatment at SickKids hospital. He was not given very long to live, but he's a wonderful grown young man now and knocking on doors even with a very bad limp. Thank you very much for coming out.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I'd like to welcome two new student volunteers in my office. Dylan Brenneman is a student at Seneca College currently studying government relations, and Megan Mattes is entering her first year of the master's of public policy program at the University of Toronto. Welcome to Queen's Park.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Miss Monique Taylor: I'm honoured to stand today to speak in support of the thousands of people in our province who live below the poverty line—the people who are unable to make ends meet, who use food banks,

who struggle to pay the hydro and the rent, while some live in shelters or even tents. These are the same people who will be impacted by this government's latest announcement.

Yesterday, the minister announced that the raise that was expected will now be cut in half, to 1.5%. The basic income pilot program will now wind down, and recipients who were benefiting will now find themselves put back into the extreme poverty that they once knew.

Hamilton was one of the communities chosen for the pilot. One thousand Hamiltonians were benefiting from the increased income. People were starting to flourish and had an opportunity to feel a bit of a safety net. Their testimonials speak of life-changing experiences, of having food in the fridge, of being able to purchase a walker. This announcement will have devastating effects for those who will no longer be able to afford the apartment that they have just rented, or will no longer have the extra to buy a gift or clothing for their loved ones or themselves.

Imagine thinking you will finally no longer have to go to the food bank, only to have it ripped out from underneath you with the stroke of a blue pen. The PCs promised to see the pilot program through. Promise made, promise broken.

GREEK COMMUNITY

Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos: On August 2, 1918, 100 years ago tomorrow, a misunderstanding between a war veteran and the Greek Canadian owner of the White City Cafe on Yonge Street triggered the largest riot this city has ever seen. Because of Greece's late entry into World War I, there was a sentiment that Greek Canadians didn't support the war effort. In fact, hundreds of young Greek Canadian men eligible to fight did so alongside our forces.

Yet, an anger fuelled by nationalistic fervour took over. As many as 15,000 returned soldiers and Torontonians took to the streets over three days, rioting and destroying businesses owned by Greek Canadians. Ultimately, the militia was called in to restore peace. The armistice soon overshadowed the riots, and they were quickly forgotten.

The racism against Greek Canadians in 1918 may surprise many of us today: 100 years later, our Greek community is an integral part of Canadian multicultural life, with an historic district, the Danforth, known for its "philoxenia," the word for hospitality in Greek.

To those who proudly support Hellenic heritage and to philhellenes on all sides of the Legislature, I invite you to join us tomorrow at Toronto city hall at noon to celebrate and recognize the contribution of Greek Canadians to Toronto.

UNITED WAY CENTRAIDE NORTH EAST ONTARIO

Mr. Jamie West: I'm proud to rise today to speak about United Way Centraide North East Ontario, or

UWCNEO. Our United Way began in Sudbury in 1982, Mr. Speaker, through an initiative by President Ron McDonald from Steelworkers Local 6500. Over the past 26 years, the United Way has worked in partnership with the community. It changed lives and provided opportunities for a brighter future.

Sudbury's United Way has also expanded over the past few years to become a regional organization covering a huge area of northeastern Ontario, including the districts of Cochrane, Greater Sudbury, Nipissing, Parry Sound, Manitoulin and Timiskaming. I'm proud to report that, to date, over \$45 million has been raised and re-invested to create opportunities that build strong communities, to help our kids be all that they can be and to move people from poverty to possibility, all while ensuring that the money that is raised locally stays locally.

I'd like to highlight one recent example of how United Way has helped our community in Sudbury, Mr. Speaker. Following a recent break-in which caused up to \$20,000 in vandalism damages, UWCNEO committed \$10,000 in emergency funding towards Meals on Wheels to support the organization as it recovered and moved forward. Meals on Wheels is an organization that provides affordable food for the community, brought to the homes.

This is just one example of the great people and organizations that are throughout Sudbury. I look forward to sharing more stories like this one in the future.

FIRE IN ARTHUR

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: July 24 was no ordinary Sunday afternoon at the Arthur Tim Hortons. The employees discovered a fire, and 30 firefighters soon arrived at the scene. No one was injured. Wellington North Fire Services Chief Dave Guilbault was quoted: "Staff did an excellent job, followed all procedures, got everybody out."

But this was no simple fire. Chief Guilbault wrote to me: "The fire started in the ceiling cavity. It had been burning for some time before staff noticed smoke. The occupants were totally unaware the fire was burning above their heads!"

At first, firefighters could not have known that the building was made of truss and lightweight construction. Chief Guilbault explains, "Our firefighters did an excellent job of containing and extinguishing the fire; however, we believe we were within moments of roof collapse.

"We were not aware that the roof trusses were lightweight. There was no way of knowing. There could have been serious injuries or loss of life."

Here's the point, Speaker: Firefighters need to know which buildings contain truss and lightweight construction. When fires break out, they need to know how to attack it. They need us to pass the Rea and Walter Act, which would clearly identify affected buildings.

My private member's bill passed second reading unanimously, but the previous government didn't follow through. I look forward to discussing this life-saving legislation with our new Minister of Community Safety.

1510

EMANCIPATION DAY

Mr. Kevin Yarde: Today is a very significant day. Today is Emancipation Day. It is a commemoration of the Slavery Abolition Act, which ended slavery in the British Empire, and thus also in Canada, back in 1834.

It is also a day that is personal to me. My ancestors came here from Virginia back in 1903 to make a better life for themselves, and it's also the reason why many others come here to Ontario today. Thus, it was truly an important step when the 2008 government passed a private member's bill designating Emancipation Day on August 1.

However, there's still a lot of work to be done. While we talk about Black History Month and all the success stories, and while we talk about things like Caribana, which of course is this Saturday, and many other achievements that Black community members have made possible, the reality is that more work needs to be done and the work is not over yet.

As New Democrats, we acknowledge the reality of anti-Black racism, including the systemic discrimination and implicit bias that negatively impacts the everyday life of many members of Ontario's Black community.

The fact that I was the first person today in this House to acknowledge that it's Emancipation Day is a little depressing to me. It was a struggle then and it continues to be a struggle now for the Black community. This is why I believe today is an important day, not just for one group but for all of us, to understand Black history and the reality of Black people here in Ontario and across the country.

ADDICTION SERVICES

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I rise today to acknowledge the vital work of the Guelph Community Health Centre. As everyone in this House knows, Ontario's overdose crisis is far-reaching, and unfortunately, my community in Guelph is not immune. Locally, our mortality rate for overdoses has tripled over the past three years. In recent weeks, health alerts have gone out across our community warning of spikes in deaths due to fentanyl-laced heroin.

Mr. Speaker, lives are being lost. These are our neighbours, and their lives matter, which is why I'm so proud of the fact that leaders of the Guelph Community Health Centre have responded and acted by putting forward an overdose prevention site. I personally toured the site just two weeks ago. Nurses and peers in the community are seeing up to 30 visitors a day. Staff work hard to connect people to health services and to treatment. They are saving lives.

I encourage the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care to review the evidence and hear the stories of the people using these sites. As a matter of fact, I invite the minister to tour the site with me. During the minister's review, I ask her to reflect on the importance of harm reduction in saving people's lives.

MUSIC FESTIVALS IN SIMCOE NORTH

Ms. Jill Dunlop: I'd like to acknowledge Republic Live and the Burl's Creek Event Grounds as they prepare for the 2018 Boots and Hearts music festival. Some 40,000-plus country music lovers will call Oro-Medonte home as they arrive for the August 9 to August 12 festival. This is Canada's largest camping and country music festival and also one of the largest in North America, featuring country music stars from all around the world.

Located in beautiful Oro-Medonte, Burl's Creek spans over 580 acres to form Canada's largest outdoor concert venue. Since purchasing the event grounds in 2014, Republic Live has continually improved infrastructure on the property to accommodate two world-class music festivals, Boots and Hearts and the WayHome Music and Arts Festival. The investment in Burl's Creek represents the largest tourism-related, privately funded investment in Ontario in the last several decades.

Republic Live takes great pride to produce safe, responsible, experiential events that are enjoyed by Oro-Medonte and Simcoe country residents, as well as national and international guests.

Republic Live has a policy of hiring and recruiting local staff, suppliers and volunteers first, and these efforts are paying off. According to a 2016 economic impact study conducted by Republic Live and RTO7, in 2015 alone, 133 Simcoe county businesses were contracted for Boots and Hearts and WayHome, with total contract values of \$3 million. Additionally, during the same year, both festivals brought \$34 million to Simcoe county's GDP and created 584 jobs.

I applaud Republic Live for their outstanding work and encourage all music lovers to attend one of these festivals.

EMANCIPATION DAY

Ms. Jill Andrew: Today, recognized in Ontario since 2008, is Emancipation Day—I want to thank you, Mr. Speaker, for your seminal role in making this happen—a day to acknowledge the 1834 abolishment of slavery in the British Empire, a day that embodies both ancestors and our own freedoms and hopes of democracy for peoples of African descent.

We cannot allow the business of government to let us lax on our commitment to freedom and democracy. The Ford government's attack on our democracy through its devious backroom deals and power-hungry municipal meddling is an affront to Ontarians' rights.

Many of the hopeful candidates are themselves progressive, Black, racialized, diverse women candidates. What message does this send? Premier Doug Ford's desire to slash city council virtually in half will directly slash the opportunities of many of these voices—voices that Progress Toronto, Women Win TO and Operation Black Vote Canada, among others, have doggedly helped lift up and rise up.

I cannot ignore the anti-Black, anti-woman, anti-progressive consequences of this government's oppressive agenda to forcibly suppress voices and representation of those historically and contemporarily most marginalized.

RELIGIOUS MINORITIES IN AFGHANISTAN

Mr. Deepak Anand: Every day I feel that we here in Canada take many things for granted that enable us to live a free life full of opportunities. In contrast, I would like to share with a heavy heart that there are many places in this world where people are living in fear and uncertainty.

Mr. Speaker, today I'd like to talk about the Hindus and Sikhs of Afghanistan. Once a population of over 300,000, now less than 1,000, these residents are living an unthinkable life. They're unable to leave their homes freely for fear of attack and harassment, children are unable to attend school—and to the extent that these people are unable to respectfully cremate their loved ones, for even funeral processions are grounds for targeted attacks. Police and government officials are unable to do anything. And the list of hardships goes on.

I'd like to acknowledge two champions, the late MLA Manmeet Singh Bhullar and current MP Garnett Genuis, both from Alberta, who have helped these religious minorities.

Through this statement, I would like to extend my help to these champions and also like to appeal to everyone else who is listening to join us in this noble cause. Let's support everyone who's working to improve the lives of any—I repeat, any—religious minorities in dire need of help. Together, let's work to build a better world.

WARSAW UPRISING

Ms. Natalia Kusendova: I'm honoured to rise today to mark the 74th anniversary of the Warsaw Uprising. On this day in 1944, after five years of brutal occupation by Nazi Germany, the Polish Home Army launched the largest underground military resistance effort of World War II. For 63 days, they fought against a stronger and better-equipped Nazi occupation force, with very little support.

While the uprising managed to make gains, the Nazis demolished over 85% of the city, 200,000 people died and, in the end, Poland lost its freedom once more, this time facing decades of occupation by the Soviet Union.

Thankfully, the spirit of resistance that motivated the Warsaw Uprising helped Poland regain its independence once and for all in 1989. Since then, each year on August 1, the city of Warsaw comes to a complete stop to mark Godzina W, or W Hour, in remembrance.

Mr. Speaker, I was proud to be a Scouts leader at ZHR Polish Scouts of Canada, where I learned of the youth who played a monumental role in the uprising. The Gray Ranks, or Szare Szeregi, were an underground Scouting association, and many of these youths paid the ultimate sacrifice for freedom.

Many Polish veterans who fought in the uprising and alongside western allies found refuge here in Ontario. I'd like to recognize the Polish Combatants' Association of Canada and several of these veterans. Thank you, Antoni Grushenko, Ryszard Opitz, Aleksander Bogdan, Mira Dzieduszycka, Maria Nowicka and Stanislaw Sadowski. Your bravery will never be forgotten.

Chwała bohaterom.

1520

MOTIONS

COMMITTEE SITTINGS

Hon. Todd Smith: I move that the following schedule for committee meetings be established for the 42nd Parliament:

The Standing Committee on Estimates may meet on Tuesdays from 9 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. and following routine proceedings to 6 p.m. and Wednesdays following routine proceedings until 6 p.m.

The Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs may meet on Thursdays from 9 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. and from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m.

The Standing Committee on General Government may meet on Mondays from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. and Wednesdays from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.

The Standing Committee on Government Agencies may meet on Tuesdays from 9 a.m. to 10:15 a.m.

The Standing Committee on Justice Policy may meet on Thursdays from 9 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. and from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m.

The Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly may meet on Wednesdays from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

The Standing Committee on Public Accounts may meet on Wednesdays from 9 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. and from 12:30 p.m. to 3 p.m.

The Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills may meet on Wednesdays from 9 a.m. to 10:15 a.m.

The Standing Committee on Social Policy may meet on Mondays from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. and Tuesdays from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Mr. Smith, Bay of Quinte, has moved that the following schedule for committee meetings be established for the 42nd Parliament:

The Standing Committee on Estimates may meet on Tuesdays from 9 a.m.—

Interjection: Dispense.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Dispense? Dispense.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Hon. Todd Smith: I move that the following changes be made to the following committee: On the Standing

Committee on Social Policy, Mr. Baber is replaced by Mr. Sabawy.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Mr. Smith has moved that the following changes be made to the following committee: On the Standing Committee on Social Policy, Mr. Baber is replaced by Mr. Sabawy.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

PETITIONS

MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

Ms. Marit Stiles: I'm proud to be tabling a petition on behalf of the chair of my local BIA, the Bloordale BIA, Liza Lukashovsky. She has presented me with this petition. It reads as follows:

"Stop Doug Ford from Interfering in Municipal Elections.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Doug Ford's decision to reduce Toronto's wards from 47 to 25 was made without any public consultation;

"Whereas Doug Ford's meddling in municipal elections is an abuse of power;

"Whereas Doug Ford is cancelling democratic elections of some regional chairs;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately reverse Doug Ford's unilateral decision to dismantle Toronto city hall and cancel regional chair elections; to maintain the existing Toronto municipal boundaries; and ensure that the provincial government does not interfere with the upcoming Toronto municipal election for Ford's political gain."

I am happy to support this petition. I will be affixing my signature and I would ask page Justin to please deliver it to the Clerks.

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas in 2003, the previous government promised a legislated care standard for residents in the province's long-term-care homes but did not deliver on that promise; and

"Whereas the Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007, empowers the provincial government to establish this minimum standard of care; and

"Whereas various studies show that four hours of service and care per resident should be a minimum target for all long-term-care homes and providers;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To legislate a care standard of a minimum of four hours per long-term-care resident per day, adjusted for acuity level and case mix."

I fully endorse this petition and will be affixing my signature to it.

MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

Ms. Jill Andrew: "Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ford government has announced, without any public consultation, plans to cut the size of Toronto city council down to 25 councillors; and

"Whereas this decrease in the number of city councillors will mean that each person in Toronto will be represented by a city councillor that will be expected to have time and resources available to serve and represent the interests of over 100,000 people for a large array of municipal issues; and

"Whereas the vast majority of Ontario municipal governments elect significantly more city councillors per person, such as Brockville, Ontario, which elects approximately one city councillor for every 3,750 people; and

"Whereas a nearly four-year independent review process concluded that a Toronto city council with 47 councillors is essential for effective representation;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"(1) Do not decrease the number of Toronto city council seats;

"(2) Do not increase the disparity between the number of city councillors elected per person in Toronto and the rest of Ontario."

I am privileged to present this on behalf of Toronto-St. Paul's residents Dave Koppes and Jeff Farrell, and I'm glad to affix my signature to this in full support. Thank you, Jamie.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Mr. Kevin Yarde: "Petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly:

"Don't Take Away Our \$15 Minimum Wage and Fairer Labour Laws.

"Whereas the vast majority of Ontarians support a \$15 minimum wage and better laws to protect workers; and

"Whereas last year, in response to overwhelming popular demand by the people of Ontario, the provincial government brought in legislation and regulations that:

"Deliver 10 personal emergency leave days for all workers, the first two of which are paid;

"Make it illegal to pay part-time temporary, casual or contract workers less than their full-time or directly hired co-workers, including equal public holiday pay and vacation pay;

"Raised the adult general minimum wage to \$14 per hour and further raises it to a \$15 minimum wage on

January 1, 2019, with annual adjustments by Ontario's consumer price index;

"Make it easier to join unions, especially for workers in the temporary help, home care, community services and building services sectors;

"Make client companies responsible for workplace health and safety for temporary agency employees;

"Provide strong enforcement through the hiring of an additional 175 employment standards officers;

"Will ensure workers have modest improvements in the scheduling of their hours, including:

"—three hours' pay when workers are expected to be on call all day, but are not called into work;

"—three hours' pay for any employee whose shift is cancelled with less than two days' notice; and

"—the right to refuse shifts without penalty if the shift is scheduled with fewer than four days' notice;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to honour these commitments, including the \$15 minimum wage and fairer scheduling rules set to take effect on January 1, 2019. We further call on the assembly to take all necessary steps to enforce these laws and extend them to ensure no worker is left without protection."

I agree with this. I will sign it and give it to page Ryan-Michael.

SCHOOL BOARDS

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank Anita Gibson from Sudbury for this petition. It reads as follows:

"Whereas the Ministry of Education oversees all school boards in the province of Ontario and as such there is an immediate need for a ministerial investigation and oversight of the Rainbow District School Board for serious contraventions contrary to the Ontario Education Act, Ontario Clean Water Act, municipal freedom of information and rights to privacy act, Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom and the Ontario Human Rights Code; and

"Whereas the Rainbow District School Board, by failing to adhere to the Ontario Clean Water Act and by failing to permanently remedy the unsafe levels of lead contamination in school drinking water (33 schools), are placing our students and educators at serious risk"—sorry.

Hon. Todd Smith: Somebody get her water.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Yes, no kidding.

"Whereas the ... systemic discrimination, abuse of power, abuse of process, excessive pay increases, incurring large legal fees to defend their malfeasance ... ;"

1530

They petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To commence an immediate detailed ministerial investigation and oversight of the Rainbow District School Board as well as a complete financial audit of school

board spending since 2010 ... by the office of the provincial auditor, and detailed reports of findings to be submitted to the Ontario Legislature."

I will give it to Jamie to bring to the Clerk.

MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

Ms. Jill Andrew: "Stop Doug Ford from Interfering in Municipal Elections."

I proudly present this on behalf of the fabulous residents of Toronto—St. Paul's.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Doug Ford's decision to reduce Toronto's wards from 47 to 25 was made without any public consultation;

"Whereas Doug Ford's meddling in municipal elections is an abuse of power;

"Whereas Doug Ford is cancelling democratic elections of some regional chairs;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately reverse Doug Ford's unilateral decision to dismantle Toronto city hall and cancel regional chair elections; to maintain the existing Toronto municipal boundaries; and ensure that the provincial government does not interfere with the upcoming Toronto municipal election for Ford's political gain."

I proudly support this petition, affix my signature and hand this to page Justin for filing with the Clerk.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

CAP AND TRADE CANCELLATION ACT, 2018

LOI DE 2018 ANNULANT LE PROGRAMME DE PLAFONNEMENT ET D'ÉCHANGE

Resuming the debate adjourned on July 31, 2018, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 4, An Act respecting the preparation of a climate change plan, providing for the wind down of the cap and trade program and repealing the Climate Change Mitigation and Low-carbon Economy Act, 2016 / Projet de loi 4, Loi concernant l'élaboration d'un plan sur le changement climatique, prévoyant la liquidation du programme de plafonnement et d'échange et abrogeant la Loi de 2016 sur l'atténuation du changement climatique et une économie sobre en carbone.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): When we last finished off, the member from Toronto—Danforth had just finished, so now we move into questions and comments. I recognize the member from Carleton.

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Ontario's carbon tax era is over. We said this during the campaign, we've continued to say it and we're saying it now. It is over. We campaigned on a clear commitment

to eliminate the cap-and-trade carbon tax. Promise made, promise kept.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, throughout the campaign I conducted several public consultations which I called Carleton Conversations. The message that I heard, whether it was from our agriculture sector, whether it was from our business owners, whether it was from families and seniors who were struggling to pay their bills—they all said the same thing. They wanted to get rid of the carbon tax and that is exactly what we did.

In fact, we started early. We're having a special sitting of this House here in the summer just so we could introduce legislation which, if passed, would officially remove Ontario's cap-and-trade carbon tax law from the books once and for all. This orderly and transparent legislation would wind down the cap-and-trade carbon tax in a way that not only minimizes the risk to taxpayers but also offers some support to eligible registered participants in the previous program.

Eliminating the cap-and-trade carbon tax is going to save the average Ontario family \$260 a year. Eliminating the cap-and-trade carbon tax is a necessary next step to reducing gas prices by 10 cents per litre.

We will use every single tool at our disposal to fight the federal government's plan to impose a punishing carbon tax on Ontario families, including supporting Saskatchewan's court challenge.

Mr. Speaker, promises made, promises kept.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Joel Harden: It's a pleasure to rise today to note something that most people learn at a young age, but I fear my friends on the opposite side of the aisle haven't gotten it yet: It's wonderful to come up with fantastic ideas, but it's very important that when you tear something apart, you actually have something to put in its place.

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Order.

Mr. Joel Harden: It's also important that when we're casting aspersions, as I hear my friend from Niagara West doing right now, on other members of the House, we do that with evidentiary proof. There is no evidentiary proof at the moment, Mr. Speaker, that anybody in this House is pledging to bankrupt Ontario families with big gas price increases.

What we have in front of us, though, with this legislation—if our friends are willing to listen to what I'm trying to say—is an attempt to cancel one regime to address climate change and supplement it with absolutely nothing.

My friend from Niagara West doesn't have children—I'm going to go out on a limb and suggest that. I do. I have a seven-year-old and I have a 10-year-old, and one of the reasons I got into politics was to make sure that the decisions I would make in this chamber with everybody here were in their best interests. Scrapping a carbon emissions regime with nothing to offer is irresponsible.

I don't care where you sit on the political spectrum; we have to have meaningful steps, and there are conserv-

ative governments elsewhere in the world, like Germany, that have taken serious steps to make the kinds of changes that will make the air and water cleaner for future generations.

So the point I offer to the members opposite: Please, when you come forward with wonderful ideas on a Thursday night or a Friday morning in the middle of the summertime, please consider, before scrapping things, replacing them with evidentiary proof. You'll be doing right by the people of Ontario, and you'll be doing right by your own party.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Dave Smith: It's interesting that the member from the NDP is asking for evidentiary proof. We have a report from the Auditor General saying that cap-and-trade in Ontario produces no measurable decline in greenhouse gases; in fact, it's a waste of money, is basically what her summary was.

It's very unfortunate that there is a group of people here in this House who believe that the best way to do anything is to tax people into poverty. We don't believe that. We believe that the best way of moving forward in Ontario is to put more money back into people's pockets.

We know from the Auditor General that this was not a well-thought-out plan. Cap-and-trade was not something that was good for the economy in Ontario. It was sending money someplace else—money that came from the people of Ontario. That's not an effective way of doing it. By saving families, on average, \$260 per year, they can choose how to spend that money.

It's also interesting that the NDP have said that we don't have a plan and yet our Minister of the Environment is introducing one. He's introducing a bill to do this. So we are moving forward. We are talking about how we're going to do things effectively.

The most effective way to do things in Ontario is to make sure that the people of Ontario are well-represented and that their financial needs are taken care of as we move forward.

I have children as well, and I want them to have the same types of advantages that I had in Ontario. I too want to make sure that they can do the things that they need to do in this province and be successful. Driving business out by taxes that do nothing more than punish this province is not the way to do it.

I'm proud to say that we're going to be opposing the federal government's implementation of a carbon tax because it's the right thing to do for Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Ms. Jill Andrew: It's a pleasure to respond to the government member.

While I do not have children, I am in a party, the NDP—we do not believe in taxing people into poverty. Neither do we believe in taking away the means from the most marginalized, low-income, disabled persons in Ontario by threatening to cut basic income. These are things that we definitely do not believe in. I cannot say the same of our friends on the other side.

1540

When we cancel cap-and-trade, what we're also doing is cancelling the potential to fix our schools. As an educator—again, I don't have children, but I have had many honorary children throughout my life, thousands of children—I've had the unhappy experience of sitting in classrooms with buckets collecting water. I've had the unhappy experience of having children physically sweating beyond belief in their classrooms because there was no air conditioning.

So I say that while we're in an obsession to cut, cut, cut, let's stop cutting, cutting, cutting the resources of our most marginalized women and children, disabled persons, racialized persons, and students of Ontario. Let's not keep cutting away at their dreams. If you don't go to school in a building that allows you to feel respect, that allows you to feel like you can learn, it does impact your academic success. Our buildings need to reflect the dreams we want our students to have.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Now I return to the member from Toronto—Danforth for final comments.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Speaker, I like your style. I like your style. I'm going to encourage good style whenever I come across it.

I want to thank the members from Carleton, Ottawa Centre, Peterborough—Kawartha and Toronto—St. Paul's for their comments.

I'm going to go to the member from Carleton first. "The Ontario carbon tax era is over," she had to say, but in fact, what you've done is open the door to the federal carbon tax. As the *Globe and Mail* reported this morning, many "companies expect that ... the federal system will still be more onerous than the one it will replace in Ontario, adding to their costs at a time of growing" competitiveness.

Maybe you haven't noticed, but the federal government has the jurisdiction to do this. You're not bringing forward an injunction to stop the federal carbon tax from going into place; you're replacing a system that has less burden with a more difficult system. I don't think you've noticed that. You should notice that because it is of consequence to the economy in this province. In fact, oil companies with refineries in Ontario also worry about the shift from cap-and-trade to the federal carbon tax. You don't have a mechanism in place to stop the federal approach. You don't, and you should admit it and be honest with the people of Ontario. I know it would be a big change, but you should do that.

I want to appreciate the comments from the member for Ottawa Centre and the member for Toronto—St. Paul's. We have to act on climate change. I went through the bill yesterday. For those of you who actually took a look at that bill, you know that it's pabulum, right? You know that there is no definition of targets. It's totally mushy when it comes to requirements for the minister to bring forward a plan of consequence.

The member for Peterborough—Kawartha: You live in an area that has a fair amount of forest. You know what's

happening globally with forest fires everywhere. You know what's happening with forest fires in this province right now. The hotter and drier it gets, the more forest fires. Our kids are going to have much tougher lives than we have because we haven't taken on climate change. That's consequential.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mrs. Amy Fee: Mr. Speaker, I rise today for my inaugural speech and to give remarks on Bill 4, but first I'd like to congratulate you on your re-election, as well, to this House.

This is a government for the people, and I'm happy to see the progress that is being made within such a short period of time. We promise to make life more affordable for families, and we have already seen tabled legislation, Bill 4, that would scrap the cap-and-trade program that is making life more and more unaffordable for everyday families across Ontario.

I wouldn't be standing in this House today, though, Mr. Speaker, if it weren't for my supportive and loving family, especially my husband, Craig, and our four children, Sarah, Kenner, Irene and Clayton.

On June 7, I was honoured to be elected by the residents of the newly formed riding of Kitchener South—Hespeler to represent them here in Ontario's Legislature. I want to thank all of the MPPs before me who have served the residents of Cambridge and Kitchener and would like to take the time to congratulate all the members of this Legislature on your election.

I am so grateful to have the opportunity to serve the more than 100,000 residents of Kitchener South—Hespeler within the cities of Cambridge and Kitchener. I have called our riding my home for almost a decade, and I am so proud to do so. Our community continues to grow, and I believe this is due to the diversity within our riding and the warm and welcoming spirit that we have.

As mentioned, the boundaries of Kitchener South—Hespeler include parts of two cities within Waterloo region: the southeasterly side of Kitchener and the portion of Cambridge north of the 401 known as Hespeler.

The riding is home to the Waterloo Region Museum, Conestoga College and the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 272, Hespeler. The picturesque Grand River runs through both cities. It is also home to the Hespeler Santa Claus Parade, and within the region Kitchener is home to the Kitchener-Waterloo Multicultural Festival, celebrating our region's diversity.

Both of these cities have contributed greatly to the history of Ontario and Canada.

The city of Cambridge was a result of the amalgamation of the towns of Hespeler, Galt and Preston in 1973. Many Ontarians will remember growing up playing hockey, and many will remember fondly their Hespeler hockey sticks. The factory known for producing these opened in 1905 and continues to produce great sporting equipment.

Kitchener has roots going back to the 1700s, and in the 1800s experienced large growth due to the number of

German immigrants. In 1833, the city was named Berlin, and in 1916 it received its current name, Kitchener. Kitchener is certainly a family-friendly city and is known for its beautiful parks, trails and natural areas. Kitchener is also home, as I mentioned, to Conestoga College, a leading educational institution and one of Ontario's fastest-growing colleges. Many Conestoga College graduates remain in Waterloo region, and it is estimated that their contributions add over \$2.3 billion a year to our local economy.

Kitchener South-Hespeler has a strong and robust economy alongside a highly skilled workforce. It is home to hundreds of businesses, large to small. I recently had the opportunity to visit the Toyota manufacturing plant located within the riding and was so impressed to see the technology and skilled labour that was required to keep this facility running. We are also so fortunate to have both the Greater K-W Chamber of Commerce and the Cambridge Chamber of Commerce advocating for our local businesses.

I continue to hear from residents and businesses that we need to make life more affordable and let people around the world know that life in Ontario is great and we are a place that will be open for business.

A carbon tax and Ontario's cap-and-trade system is a barrier to achieving these goals. That is why it is so important that we support the tabled legislation to eliminate cap-and-trade, putting more money back into the pockets of people. This was an unfair burden to families. Everything from groceries to gas to heating our homes during the winter months is all getting more expensive.

Mr. Speaker, before I even decided to run for my prior role as a school board trustee, my husband, Craig, would frequently pick up the slack at home when other parents of children with special needs would call me for advice. As I have two children with autism spectrum disorder, and my mother was a teacher who was known for passionately advocating for children with special needs, I became known within my community as being an excellent resource to help frustrated parents who were confused trying to navigate our school system. It was those conversations with families that led me to run for the school board in 2014.

While I loved my work as a trustee, and I certainly miss my role at the school board every day, I soon realized there was more I needed to do to be able to support those families in my community. That's when some rather long conversations started with my family as to whether or not running provincially was something they could support me in. It has meant some long days and nights over the last few years, and for me now it's meaning a lot of time away from my family. But what I get from them is unconditional love and support, and that makes the time that I do have with them all that much more special.

Mr. Speaker, my extended family and my life experiences have also played a huge role in shaping who I am today and the type of elected representative I want to be for the residents in Kitchener South-Hespeler.

1550

I grew up in the Durham region. My dad was an auto worker at GM and, as I mentioned, my mom was a teacher. From the time I was a young girl, my parents would talk to me about the importance of politics and being politically aware. My uncle Lyle Trimble was an MLA for the Mackenzie Delta in the Northwest Territories, first taking office in 1964. For as long as I can remember, another uncle, Rev. Lorne Trimble, served in municipal politics for six terms and always volunteered on local election campaigns and also with Elections Ontario as well. He's been a huge supporter of mine and was absolutely ecstatic when I announced that I was going to be running for the Ontario PC Party.

Speaking of that huge support that is within my family, I have to mention my brother, my sister and my sister-in-law. My brother Scott, his wife Ruth and my sister Tracey, have been amazing at backing me through this campaign and getting me here into this Legislature to represent the people in my riding. They donated to my campaign and they helped watch my kids when my parents were overtaxed, trying to take care of my kids every day. I couldn't have done this without their support as well.

From a young age, my dad, Larry, would talk to me about what it was to know who you were voting for, why you were voting for them and what they would do for you, both locally in your province and across the country. It was those conversations that led me to become what I would describe as a bit of a news geek. I would get up in the morning to read the newspaper. I would go home from school at lunchtime to watch the noon news. I just wanted to know what was going on in the world.

I started working at a local radio station while I was in high school and got my start on air doing the scoring updates for the Oshawa Generals games on CKDO. My very first interview was with the late MPP for Whitby-Oshawa, the Honourable Jim Flaherty. I was extremely nervous as I called him at home on an early Saturday morning. He was so kind to me—I was a total rookie—and as we wrapped up that interview, he congratulated me. That stuck with me through my whole career. It has stuck with me here, it stuck with me through my election campaign, and I will always cherish the conversations that I had with him.

He let me know in that call that I could call him any time, and he joked with me that if I forgot to ask him any questions or if I forgot to hit record on that interview, I could call him back that morning, too. During my time at that radio station in Oshawa, we talked almost every Saturday morning I worked, and he would update me on what was going on at Queen's Park or what events he might be going to in the community. It was great to have that connection and to have someone who was patient enough to take that time with me, being such a young broadcaster at that time. Like I said, I will always cherish those conversations.

My career in broadcasting took me to stops in Saskatchewan, Alberta and BC, but I always knew that I

wanted to get back home to Ontario. It was nearly a decade ago, with at that time only two children in tow, that my husband and I finally had the opportunity to move where we wanted to go, which was Kitchener. I had already fallen in love with Waterloo region and I knew it was where I wanted to raise my children. What I wasn't expecting was how much the amazing people in my neighbourhood would mean to me and how much influence they would have on my life. Both a sense of pride and community spirit are abundant in Kitchener South and Hespeler.

It was a few years after our arrival in Kitchener that we discovered that my eldest son has autism. How we found out, though, is a way that I hope no other parent has to ever go through. After one appointment, an observation, with no mention of a possibility of autism, a diagnostic letter arrived in the mail. It was a gut-wrenching experience as we worried what the future would hold for him. Hundreds of hours of appointments and assessments followed. We spent tens of thousands of dollars out of our own pocket. Eventually our son graduated out of the old autism program. During that time, he had progressed from a little boy with only about a dozen words—screaming incessantly for hours as he dealt with not only the challenge of being on the autism spectrum, but also having the inability to express his feelings.

My son Kenner is a shining example of what happens with early intervention for children with autism. Even though he was well over the age of five by the time the former Liberal government cut funding for therapy for children with autism over the age of five, he was outraged. I was outraged. We were at Queen's Park two years ago as dozens of parents protested the Liberal cuts. Not only did I get to speak with some of those families who felt their children's futures were being ripped away from them, but I watched my son explain to many of the MPPs about how he began the autism therapy after he turned five and how much it had helped him.

Just last fall, I was back at Queen's Park with families as they protested again, this time over a lack of supports in our school system. This time, my then nine-year-old son was brave enough to speak to the crowd about the challenges he has faced in our school system. The same child that we worried would never have functional language addressed those in attendance, including many who are now here, my colleagues, about how badly the Liberal government was failing children with special needs in our education system.

Mr. Speaker, over the last few years I've come to know many children and adults with autism and unique abilities across Ontario, and I am truly honoured by the trust that has been placed in me by not only the constituents of Kitchener South–Hespeler, but our Premier, to have me represent these families as the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services. I know first-hand how devastating it is to watch your child languish on wait-lists, to struggle to cope in a classroom and be bullied by their peers and, even worse, adults just because they react to the world

differently than what they expect. I know what it's like to have your child bolt into traffic or wander off in public or curl up in a ball and scream for hours on end because they are so desperately trying to tell you what's wrong. Please know that I am here in this Legislature to work for the people, and that includes all people with special needs.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to talk now about some of the amazing people who helped with my campaign to get me here. On my first day of door-knocking, I met someone who would become one of my most dedicated volunteers, Clayton Reid. Even though we don't live far from each other, we had never met, but he immediately got involved and personally knocked on thousands of doors.

I certainly had too many volunteers to mention them all, but a few key supporters I had were: Marian Gagné; Mina Torodov; Alan Keeso; Scott McNab; my riding association board, led by our president, Jon Olinski; and certainly so many others who worked tirelessly, knocking on doors, stuffing envelopes and doing anything and everything they could to help make sure that I had time to get to as many doors as possible.

Being a mother of four, I couldn't have made it through my campaign without some great child care supports. My mom didn't even complain once when I asked her to come stay with us, away from my dad and her home in Bowmanville, for six weeks. She also happens to be at my house again this week, taking care of my children. I also have the continued and amazing support of our nanny, a young woman I am proud to now call a dear friend, Kristi Ostrander.

My core campaign team was with me through thick and thin: Alide Forstmanis, Cam Anderson, Madison Cox, Nick Switalski and my campaign manager, Chad Dance. We had many early Sunday morning meetings and plenty of long nights throughout the campaign, but they managed to keep me calm and focused and getting to as many doors as possible.

There are so many special people, but without them all, I wouldn't be here today to represent the people of Kitchener South–Hespeler.

During the campaign, we knocked on thousands of doors, and it was those doorstep conversations that only fuelled my dedication to our community—a dedication to ensuring that we formed a government that would be for the people, a government that will work to respect taxpayers, that will listen to our constituents and work hard to make life more affordable for families.

One mother I will never forget talked to me in tears about how unaffordable life had become for her. She was struggling to decide if she should pay her hydro bill or buy her daughter the new pair of shoes she needed to go to school.

Not too far away from where that family lives is a vacant storefront, one where a long-time, locally run family business used to be. The owner told me it wasn't worth it for him to keep the doors open because he now had to be away from his family seven days a week because he could no longer afford the staff because of his out-of-control hydro bills.

1600

Near the end of the campaign, I was in a restaurant and I met a young woman with autism. Without realizing who I was, she asked me to vote for Doug Ford for Premier. When I explained to her that I was the candidate that she was going to be voting for, she told me why she believes only we can ensure a better life for her. When Bill 148 came into effect, she went from having multiple shifts a week at a business in Cambridge—a job that she was so proud to have—to having just a single shift a week, a move that she said her boss had to make because they could no longer afford to have her work so many shifts.

During the campaign, I had a clear message: I wanted to make life more affordable for families, including lowering our hydro bills and removing cap-and-trade. And I am so proud that this government is taking decisive action with Bill 4 to end cap-and-trade. For us, it's another promise made and promise kept.

We have presented transparent legislation that will wind down cap-and-trade and the carbon tax program. This is all about making sure that Ontario's families have what they need. As my seatmate and the member for Cambridge said yesterday in this House, "A tax is a tax is a tax."

Mr. Speaker, we will continue to stand up for the interests of Ontarians. Last week, I was proud to put forth a motion calling on the federal government to provide \$200 million for their share of the costs related to refugees settling in this province. We need to ensure that they have respect and dignity as they transition into our local communities. We believe that the government of Canada has a responsibility to manage the influx of crossers and deliver the necessary funding that is needed to provide that dignity and respect.

Our government, alongside the residents of Ontario, recognizes the importance of immigration, both culturally and economically, especially in my riding of Kitchener South—Hespeler. Our newest residents are bringing with them skills, knowledge and a variety of different talents that give Ontario the tools that we need to move our province forward. We will not back down until our newest residents have what they need too.

I am proud to be part of a government for the people, and I am looking forward to building on our current momentum as we work to get Ontario back on the right financial track. By doing this, we can ensure that we have the tools to invest in our youth and vital public services, like our schools and our hospitals. We need to respect the taxpayers of this province and put everyday workers and families first.

We are committed to letting everyone know that Ontario is open for business again. We will reduce both taxes and regulatory burdens to make sure that businesses have what they need to provide good-quality jobs across Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud and honoured to be standing here today as the first MPP for our new riding of Kitchener South—Hespeler. It is the stories that I have

shared today, and the hundreds more that I experienced when we were door-knocking, that are why I'm here and are what will keep me grounded working for the people of my riding.

So again, thank you to everyone in Kitchener South—Hespeler. I'm honoured to be able to serve you in this Legislature.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions and comments?

Ms. Jill Andrew: I would first like to congratulate the member across the floor on her election. I absolutely appreciate her words and appreciate her journey. I empathize with the challenges that she and her family faced in an educational system that doesn't always see those who are right in front of their faces. Case in point: disabled children.

As a child and youth worker, in 1998 I graduated from Humber College. I, too, had opportunities to work with autistic kids, children with Asperger's, children who had various behavioural needs and exceptionalities. The one thing I always remembered is that they were fantastic kids. They had the whole world ahead of them, and all they needed was a caring adult.

As I continued my career—high school teacher, equity adviser—what I realized was that sometimes finding that caring adult—finding the adult, period—in a school was like a mirage. You'd see it; it goes away; it's not there; it's only in our minds and dreams.

We keep talking about the Liberals and their education cuts and what they've done to our educational system. I agree with that, but we also have to remember the Mike Harris funding formula. If I am correct, as a newly elected MPP, Mike Harris played for your team. The Conservative funding formula cut programs. It cut arts—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you very much.

Further questions and comments?

Mr. Billy Pang: During the election, our PC government promised to bring gas prices down by 10 cents a litre and help reduce costs for Ontario families and businesses. Our PC government plans to keep this promise.

During my campaign, I spent most of the day on door-knocking, talking to my constituents and listening to all of their concerns. I found that the wind-down of the cap-and-trade program was well supported and exactly what most of my constituents were looking for.

On election day, we won by 62.4% of the vote in my riding. In this assembly, we have 76 members. This is a very loud and clear message and this is democracy.

Markham—Unionville is a community with hard-working residents. They work hard and long hours to put food on the table. The carbon tax is not just a concern but a heavy burden on their shoulders. They want a government that can put money back into their pockets. They want a government that respects their tax dollars.

Eliminating the cap-and-trade carbon tax is a necessity. This is a step to save the average family \$260 a year. We will use every tool at our disposal to fight the federal

government's plan to impose a punishing carbon tax on Ontario families, including supporting Saskatchewan's court challenge. Promise made; promise kept.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Ms. Laura Mae Lindo: Congratulations to my neighbour, who is the member from Kitchener South—Hespeler. I wanted to just begin by saying how much your words about working with your son and having to work with school systems to better support your son resonated. I, too, am an educator and I know that, when you are working with students who don't fit that regular mould, teachers have a difficult time because they're not taught that in schools.

What I'm hopeful for, because you come with that lived experience into this House, is that you can take that same type of thinking and that manner of what it is that you have to now ask educators for—and that we ask educators for when we're doing work with kids with autism—when it comes to the other promises that the Conservative government is making, because the impact is different depending on communities that we're working with.

So again, to you through the Speaker, I know that when we decide to pause programs like social assistance etc., in the grand scheme of things, when we're thinking of everybody in Ontario as though they are a cookie cutter in one box, that makes perfect sense. But I also know that individuals who are living on that poverty line, stuck in that cycle of poverty, are impacted in real ways. What they're asking is for somebody who has lived experience that would allow them to think differently about how they put these into practice. It's not that the idea of running a government in a way that is fiscal is problematic. That's not the problem. The issue is that different people are starting at different points.

So I believe that you are a prime example of somebody who can bring a wealth of experience to the party and to the government. Thank you very much.

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The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: I'd like to begin by congratulating my colleague the member for Kitchener South—Hespeler on her election. I could not be happier to have an ally in this House to help on issues facing individuals with autism and their families.

I was incredibly touched to hear the member's story about what inspired her to get involved in politics and pursue public service, the story about her struggles with her two children, Kenner and her other child as well. I've got to say that when the member spoke about her son screaming and being in such terrible, terrible distress and not understanding why, that resonated deeply with me because my family went through a similar experience with my brother.

I think there are far too many families that are going through this crisis across this province today. This is one of the reasons why our new PC government led by

Premier Doug Ford is an incredibly exciting moment for families in the special-needs community.

The member from Kitchener South—Hespeler talked about how she wants to be a champion here, and talked about some of her mentors that helped guide her here. When I look at the team that we have put together on our side, we have the Deputy Premier, who has a child with special needs; we have the parliamentary secretary to health with a child with special needs; we have the member opposite who herself is now the parliamentary assistant dedicated to helping individuals with autism: so many people here with those personal experiences who are going to be champions moving forward.

I know the member mentioned that she's spending a lot of time away from her family, but I just want to close by saying that I know for certain that her family is incredibly proud of the work she is doing here today.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Now we return to the member from Kitchener South—Hespeler for final comments.

Mrs. Amy Fee: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to start by definitely thanking the members from Markham—Unionville and Ottawa West—Nepean—Jeremy, you're about to make me cry—the member for St. Paul's, and of course—I guess we are bordering ridings, essentially—the member for Kitchener Centre as well.

During my time as a school board trustee and obviously as a parent advocating for children with special needs, I had many off-line conversations with many teachers, not just my children's own teachers, talking about the struggles that they are facing or that our educational assistants are facing in the classroom. Those are real struggles, Mr. Speaker. They are struggling to get the support that they need to understand how to best support the children in their classroom, and needing a system that can work together to best support what these children need.

Our teachers are our strongest resource, and the member for Kitchener Centre is right: These teachers are asking for more support. That is what our government intends to do. We want to work with our education system. That is why I'm so proud that Lisa Thompson is our education minister. She has teachers in her family. She knows our education system.

Sam Oosterhoff, our parliamentary assistant, has been extremely dedicated to making sure that he is working to support his minister and meeting with stakeholders, especially stakeholders who are working with children with special needs, to make sure that we build up our students and have a world-renowned education system that supports everyone, including our students with special needs and our educators and EAs that are in those classrooms.

It is about mental health as well, for all of them. We need to make sure that they are supported. That way, the kids in our classrooms are supported as best they can be.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate? I turn now to the member from University—Rosedale.

Ms. Jessica Bell: I stand here as the MPP for University–Rosedale because I received a tremendous amount of support from so many people—my neighbours, my friends, my colleagues, my family, and so many elected representatives who have represented and who continue to represent the people of my riding: Rosario Marchese, Mike Layton, Joe Cressy, Kristyn Wong-Tam, Joe Pantalone, Olivia Chow, Ausma Malik and Chris Moise. Thank you. I wouldn't be here without you.

You've placed a great deal of trust in me to represent the riding of University–Rosedale, and I will bring everything I am and everything that I can do to this job—as a mother, as an immigrant, as a wife, as a daughter and as a daughter-in-law, balancing a tightrope of caring for children and also caring for aging parents, and as a community organizer standing up for the environment and human rights.

It's my work as a community organizer that has provided me with so much experience and meaning and direction throughout my life. My work has taken me to California, where I worked with farmers and food banks to build a healthy food system that tackles hunger in a state where one in five children go hungry at night. This is the state that is the breadbasket for the world.

My work has taken me to Toronto, where I was the founding executive director of a transit advocacy organization called TTCriders, where we have worked to build a world-class public transit system that's also affordable. It has led to us winning real and concrete improvements, such as the cheaper Union Pearson Express; two-hour fare transfers, which are coming in this month, so we can get on and off the TTC without paying twice; and a low-income pass discount for people who earn \$26,000 or less or people who are on social assistance so they can continue to have the right to travel around our wonderful city.

It has also taken me to BC and Ontario, where I've supported First Nations communities like Grassy Narrows in Ontario and the Haida in British Columbia to say no to unwanted mercury poisoning on their land, no to unwanted logging of US multinationals and yes to a better future.

It's that last job where I met David, my future husband. I was on his hiring committee, and I was the only person on his hiring committee who said, "No, we should absolutely not hire him." Fortunately, I was outvoted by my colleagues, and I'm very pleased they did because David is the reason I now call University–Rosedale home. He probably regrets it—if he knew I was going to run to be a politician—because being a husband or a wife or a partner of a politician is not an easy job.

It's in this riding that David and I get to raise our two kids, Max and Ayla, who go to one of the many wonderful local public schools in University–Rosedale. It's in this riding that my family enjoys so many of the wonderful parks that are our community's backyards, especially for those of us, like myself, who live in apartments: parks like Healey Willan and Christie Pits. It's in

this riding where I shop for groceries and support local businesses, including local businesses in the Kensington area, which is struggling with gentrification and struggling to keep its rich history, as well as many of the local businesses along Bloor, College and Dundas, businesses that are struggling to stay and survive.

It's in this riding where I completed my degree at the world-class university that is the University of Toronto.

And it's in this riding where I use and frequent our world-class public hospitals, like SickKids, Toronto Western, Princess Margaret and Mount Sinai. They're places of innovation. They're places of hope, of healing, of life and death. They're places I go when my daughter is sick. They're places I visit when my friend had twins, which is a blessing and a curse. And it's a place that I visit when a colleague, a very good friend of mine, lost his wife of 40 years to cancer. He had a lot of great support from the Princess Margaret hospital, but it was also a very hard time.

Now I have the privilege of working here at Queen's Park to stand up for my home, to build on all the wonderful things that we have in University–Rosedale, and also to face and then work on improving some of our challenges—challenges like affordable housing.

Interjection.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Yes, you know.

So I canvassed my riding for over a year, and I met so many people time and time and time again who were scared about our housing market, people who have given up on the dream of home ownership and all the stability that it provides because you can't afford to own a home in Toronto. For young people, it takes 20 years to save up money for a down payment. I met people, many people, who were terrified their landlord was going to sell and evict them. When you're evicted in Toronto right now, you are facing a very tough choice because it's very hard to find an apartment and it's extremely hard to find an affordable one.

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That's what's happening to my neighbour right now—a typical story. She's a single mom, a widow. Her landlord sold the house for over \$1.6 million, and now he is trying to illegally evict her. She doesn't want to go, because, if she is evicted, she will have to leave our neighbourhood, and that means saying goodbye to her friends, finding a new school for her son, finding another coveted daycare spot, which is next to impossible to find, finding new friends and, in all likelihood, starting a very long commute back to the job that she has in University–Rosedale.

Affordable housing is a solvable problem. It requires a mixture of building new, affordable housing and it also requires regulation, such as regulating our housing market and providing stronger protections for renters.

It's also in this riding that we face the challenge of transit and gridlock. Many people who live in this riding want to have the ability to ride to work or pick up their kids and know they're not going to get doored or injured or killed when they're on their bike. Many people I know

don't want to leave for work half an hour early because they need to leave that extra buffer of time to factor in the overcrowding, the long wait times and delays on the subway, which are becoming a daily occurrence. There are many people, especially lower-income people, who are having difficulty facing the constant increase in fares, year in and year out. A hundred dollars here, a hundred dollars here—they're going up way faster than inflation. It's affecting ridership on the TTC. It's making life harder and it's making life less affordable.

I hear that Doug Ford wants to tackle gridlock in Toronto. I'd be welcome to talk to him. My door is certainly open.

It's here in my riding, and also all across Toronto, that we face an issue with our economy, because our economy doesn't work for people. When I went door to door, I met so many people who are working, but they're working and they have precarious jobs. They have part-time jobs. They have unstable jobs. They have minimum wage jobs. They have two jobs. Sometimes, they have three jobs. They have jobs you cannot build a life on. They have jobs you cannot pay for daycare on. They have jobs you cannot afford to buy a house on. And they're jobs you cannot retire on. That's a shame.

We need to replace precarious jobs with good jobs. We need to stick to a \$15 minimum wage and index it to inflation. And we need a fair taxation system that properly taxes our wealthy individuals and our highest corporations so we can have a social safety net and lift everybody up. These are the issues that are important to me.

It's also my job to fight for a meaningful response to climate change. And here we've got the Cap and Trade Cancellation Act, a bill that will cancel the cap-and-trade program, set compensation limits, eliminate the possibility of businesses and people to sue for damages and cancel the greenhouse gas fund.

Of all the bills to do an inaugural speech on, this is the issue that I wanted to speak to. This is the issue that inspired me to first become politically involved, first as a community organizer and now as an elected official.

Becoming politically active, as many of you probably know, is a process, and there are many defining moments. For me, one of those key defining moments was when I was on a college trip to visit different farming practices in Australia. That's where I grew up.

I was in the passenger seat with my student teacher, who was the driver, reading interesting bits of the newspaper out loud—yes, pretty annoying; I was a nerd.

About an hour or so into the drive, my teacher pulled the newspaper away from me, and she said, "You know what? If you want to know what's going on in the world, you need to stop reading the newspaper and you need to start looking around and making up your own mind on what's going on and assessing the world for yourself."

She had a point, and I did that. What I saw when I looked outside were dead fields, no animals and a land that was in crisis—because, at that time, Australia was facing the worst drought that it has ever faced in its

history. It was known as the Millennium Drought. Every scientist that isn't paid off by the oil industry knows that this is a drought that was made worse by climate change. One of our core river systems collapsed, and Australia, unlike Canada, doesn't have too many river systems. Farms were destroyed. Farmers were being paid to walk off their farms. Entire crops were decimated—cotton, citrus. People were talking about losing 100-year-old orange tree groves. They don't grow back. They were gone. Water supplies in the cities dropped to 30%. We were on emergency rations, similar to what we're seeing in Cape Town in South Africa right now.

What that experience taught me is that climate change isn't just something that you see on the TV or in the newspaper; it's here, it's always been here and it's getting worse. We see it in the extreme fires, like Fort McMurray and now with the out-of-control fires in Ontario, in Alberta, in Asia, in the Arctic, in Sweden, in Norway and in California. We see it in the flooding from Houston, Texas, to Ontario. We see it with the extreme heat waves that are rolling all across the world from Japan to Quebec.

This summer in Quebec, we recorded the deaths of over 18 people as a result of the heat waves. I'm sure there were many in Toronto, but we don't track it here. They track it in Quebec, so they know. And those people were the elderly, the sick. All of them were in apartments with no air conditioning, and almost all of them lived alone.

Climate change is a moral crisis. It's a human crisis. It's an economic crisis. And it is getting worse.

And what's the Conservatives' response? "Cancelling cap-and-trade is going to save taxpayers' money"—it's going to save money. So let's look at how much. The government's technical briefing shows that families who earn more than \$150,000 a year will save an average benefit of \$403 a year, while families earning less than \$40,000 will save about 100 bucks. That's about \$8 to \$40 a month. And for all those savings, this is what we look at losing:

There's the \$30-million cost of launching what will be a failed court case against the federal government, who will now impose a carbon tax.

There's the cost of retooling all our infrastructure, from our schools to our sewage system, that cannot handle the extreme weather. Take Toronto's sewage system, just as one small example. It cannot handle the expected rise in extreme flooding and rain events. It needs a multi-billion dollar upgrade. And what that means, if we don't do it, is more pollution for Lake Ontario and more flooding for basements—at a bare minimum.

There's the cost of cancelling sensible programs that were funded by this cap-and-trade program, programs like the \$100 million in school repairs to contribute to the \$16-billion backlog that all our schools are facing across Ontario. I see the impact of that backlog in my riding right here. There are no basic air cooling systems, when kids are sweating it out in classrooms during May, June

and September heat waves. People like Jed Sears, a student at King Eddie—he talks about how half the kids in his school leave in the final two weeks of the year because their parents don't think it's safe to send their kids to school. They have thermometers in some of the schools, and they reach 34 degrees. You cannot teach and you cannot learn in 34-degree temperatures.

We're also losing programs like the \$64 million to help hospitals—including small and rural hospitals—become more efficient so hospitals can save money on electricity bills. That's also gone because of this program.

And we're also losing programs like the Ontario Municipal Commuter Cycling Program, which contributed to building cycling infrastructure to make cycling a safe option for people—gone.

Then there is the opportunity cost that we are losing because we are failing to invest in our transition to a green economy and creating good green jobs for the future. We're losing that entire opportunity cost.

It's an absolute myth that the environment and the economy cannot work together. The case in point is California. California has met its emissions targets four years early, and now has carbon emissions that are lower than what they had in 1990. California also happens to be one of the most successful economies in the world. That's a success story we should aspire to, not run away from.

I'm not saying that cap-and-trade is the perfect path forward. I also have concerns with it. The targets were not stringent enough; it's not transparent enough; we're giving free emission permits to polluters; the benefits of the program do not adequately help those who are being impacted by climate change first and worst; and there's no adequate transition plan to help workers who are in industries that might need to be transitioned.

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But the solution should not be to scrap what we have; it should be to fix it. So what's the Conservatives' response? The Conservatives' response is to say, "We're going to come up with a plan later." In this bill, there is no timeline on when we are going to have a greenhouse gas reduction plan. There is no commitment to stick to a set greenhouse gas emissions reduction target. You can come up with a plan and change it whenever you want, according to this bill.

The targets will not be enshrined in law or regulation. There are no requirements to consider the Paris agreement temperature goals. There is no requirement to seek expert advice or do public consultation, and the plan will be exempt from the Environmental Assessment Act. That's not a plan; that's a sound bite.

In fact, you're so opposed to a plan that you're going to use taxpayer dollars to sue the federal government to stop them from imposing a carbon tax plan on Ontario. That's not leadership. That's reckless. It's dangerous. It's putting us at increased risk. It's killing people. It's costing us money, and it's depriving us of an opportunity to shift to a green economy and a hopeful future. That's

why I'm not in support of this bill to cancel the cap-and-trade program in Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions and comments?

Ms. Jane McKenna: Speaker, I'll tell you one thing that I didn't miss from the four years that I was here: Listening to the NDP politicking, fear-mongering—the sky is always falling. I happened to listen to the former speaker, from Toronto–Danforth, and it was like he was putting out an all-points bulletin for climate change.

I just want to point out a few things: The people of Ontario know better. That's why we got elected as PCs, which we're very proud of.

I want to thank Minister Phillips from Ajax for bringing this bill forward. It's eliminating carbon tax. We've said it 1,000 times: We're for the people. It will save the average family \$260 per year and help reduce gas prices by 10 cents per litre.

I want to be as clear as ice water:

(1) Cap-and-trade does nothing for the climate except send money to California—billions, in fact.

(2) The Auditor General said it won't significantly reduce greenhouse gases. This isn't hard to understand.

(3) It hurts our businesses. It makes us uncompetitive.

(4) Our main competitors, south of us, aren't doing it.

(5) It has driven up the costs of electricity so high that it is just a tax, and a bad tax. It is an uncompetitive tax.

I'll tell you one thing: There has never been one tax that the NDP and the Liberals haven't loved.

I'll point out one other quick thing—my friend brought this over to me a minute ago—the National Post. I'm just going to read what they said:

"Last week, the Angus Reid Institute published a new national public opinion poll indicating that seven out of 10 Canadians believe the government of Saskatchewan was right to challenge the Trudeau carbon tax in court, while two thirds of Canadians believe it should be the provinces—not Ottawa—that determine the appropriate path to reduce greenhouse gas emissions."

There you go, in plain English, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Jamie West: To the comments earlier from the speaker across: My colleagues from the Conservative Party like to talk about putting money into people's pockets and how important it is—

Interjections.

Mr. Jamie West: Excellent. Except, Mr. Speaker, they don't believe in putting money in people's pockets if they're on OW or ODSP. They don't believe in putting money in people's pockets when it comes to having a fair minimum wage of \$15 an hour. They don't believe in putting money in the pockets of people who don't have the refunds from the contracts that have already been signed for the GreenON energy grants.

My colleagues from across the aisle there don't believe in putting money in the pockets of businesses that have already purchased the windows, or putting money in the pockets of the businesses that have paid their employ-

ees to install these windows. It's a pick-and-choose sort of economy they believe in.

When they talk about putting money in pockets, what they're talking about, Mr. Speaker, is eight bucks. Eight bucks is what they are going to sell it out for.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: That's four coffees.

Mr. Jamie West: Four coffees.

When they talk about putting money in pockets, they don't mind spending millions fighting a losing battle with the federal government. They don't mind spending \$50,000 to hire their buddies for a month to do an audit that we already do internally for the government.

This is a government that, when it comes to climate change, believes they can suck and blow at the same time.

Within a 10-minute period yesterday, Mr. Speaker, this government argued that the physical health curriculum needed more consultation but that meddling in the municipal elections in Toronto needed less.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments? The member from Northumberland–Peterborough North.

Mr. David Piccini: Peterborough South. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Congratulations to the member for University–Rosedale. I think everyone was touched with your life experience stories, and certainly the vote you lost with your husband is one vote that I think you're glad you lost. So congratulations on being elected to this place.

The member spoke about precarious jobs and replacing them with good jobs. I'm proud to stand with the party on this side of the House. That's precisely what we're going to be doing. We talked about people having a living wage and about supporting that gainful employment. It's not done by dropping a 32% increase on small businesses. As I was out in rural Ontario speaking to a lot of small businesses, the lifeblood of our community, they were saying to me this is the same government, former government, that three years ago said, "We're not going to drop this on you. We're going to do it with inflation," and then drop in a cynical move to get votes.

If you think about housing, that's the largest expenditure for many—mortgage payments, or rent for those who rent. Imagine increasing that by 32%. It's not fair. Our small businesses are the last people to take home a paycheque; they're job creators. The majority in my community are small businesses of around nine or fewer employees, and that's fundamentally not fair.

So we're going to create the conditions for greater opportunity through lowering the small business tax credit, through engaging small businesses in the process, not cynically trying to get votes. That's what's going to create the conditions for greater opportunity.

On that note, when we talk about creating the conditions and increasing services, it's about getting out from behind the newspaper, as you said, which is what we've done with Torontonians. It's listening to them. The answer isn't bigger government, more politicians. The answer is more money for programs and services to

support the people of this great city and this great province.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I'm pleased to add some comments to the debate today.

I want to first congratulate and thank our colleague the member from University–Rosedale. I think she gave an eloquent inaugural speech and laid out quite firmly what her priorities will be and, of course, gave us a snapshot of her lived experience, which I think will serve us well, and it serves us all well to bring those ideas here to this House.

I've heard some concepts bantered about by members of the government.

The member from Burlington took it upon herself to throw out some talking points stuff that really isn't factual or based in true policy that we've seen yet from this government, sort of the bumper-sticker slogan stuff that we saw during the election.

The member from Northumberland–Peterborough South: You got a little bit closer to putting forward, frankly, some concepts that I'd like to hear a little bit more about, things that I would have liked to have heard during the general election and that were void in any platform—because there was no platform from your party. I'm hearing some ideas around small business tax credits. These are things that New Democrats have advocated for before. We understand that small businesses in our communities are job creators. At the end of your speech, you also talked about putting more money out there—less government, but putting more money out there to support services and programs. How do you do that without effective taxation measures? That's something that I think our member from University–Rosedale alluded to as well. We should have effective taxation measures, fair taxation measures, but also recuperating those taxes that are somewhere offshore—\$8 billion a year that Canadian corporations hide offshore. That's money that could certainly go a long way in supporting all the initiatives that I hope this government wants to put forward.

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I will finish by again congratulating my colleague, our colleague, the member from University–Rosedale for her eloquent speech today.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Now I return to the member from University–Rosedale for final comments.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Thank you very much for listening and for talking. I also have, as I mentioned, a lot of small businesses in my own riding of University–Rosedale: businesses along College Street and Dundas Street, Kensington and Bloor Street. There are multiple reasons why some of them are struggling. It includes very high hydro rates. It includes commercial taxation and commercial rent, which is not subject to any meaningful rent control. That's one of the biggest reasons why the

businesses that I'm talking to are having difficulty surviving.

But I also believe that we also need a balance around supporting small businesses, and then also making sure that every worker in Ontario can take home a living wage and continue to put food on the table, pay for their heating bills, pay for their rent and lead a decent life. Having a \$15 minimum wage is really critical to that.

I do call on you, when you talk about having concerns with the cap-and-trade program, as some of you have mentioned, saying that it's not good enough—well, then, the onus is on the Conservatives to come up with a plan that is commensurate and is as significant as the problem that we face. If you don't like it, then come up with a plan that actually works—a plan with real targets, a plan that has meaningful regulation in law, a plan that is subject to public review and public consultation, and a plan that is based on evidence. You're the government. It's your job to do it. So I'm looking forward to seeing that sensible climate change plan when it comes forward.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: What a pleasure it is to be able to stand in the Legislature today on behalf of the constituents of Niagara West to contribute to the discussions that we have in this House, discussions and debate about very meaningful issues, ones that impact the lives of millions of Ontarians, the lives of people not only in Niagara West but in Kitchener, Toronto, Windsor, Thunder Bay and across our beautiful province.

I want to say that this issue that we're going to be speaking about today and that we've had the chance already to debate in this House—the concept of a carbon tax, the concept of cap-and-trade—is one that has come up time and time again. Before we perhaps dig into some of the more specific issues that are at play here, I want to do a little bit of a history lesson for those of us who—I know this sounds a little strange coming from my mouth—were around 10 years ago. That would be most of us, but for those of us who were politically engaged at the time, you might remember a concept called the Green Shift. The Green Shift came about from a particular gentleman by the name of Stéphane Dion, who had a very distinguished career. He's someone who I believe was a true gentleman—and is a true gentleman; he hasn't passed on. He is a true gentleman, someone who believes very passionately in the importance of environmental conservation and, I believe, does indeed understand that it's important to make sure we're passing on a planet and passing on our future conservation needs to generations, as well. Being someone who is passionate about our beautiful country, he brought forward what he thought was a good idea.

His Green Shift, as has become abundantly clear and as was very clearly brought forward in front of the electorate in the 2008 election, was an idea of a tax on everything. His idea was that what we were going to do was to create this massive carbon tax—a tax that will somehow magically save our environment and create an end to all

changes that might be coming about because of climate change. This was somehow going to fix everything in Canada, especially as we were heading into a recession.

The reality was that the electorate, in 2008, had another say. The electorate on June 7, 2018, some 10 years later had something else to say to the Liberal government that proposed—although they didn't phrase it in as many words, although they might have used carbon tax or green-chip carbon tax instead of cap-and-trade carbon scheme. They also had their say on June 7. Their say in both cases was remarkably similar. The only difference is that after June 7, the Liberal caucus was about the same size as the rest of my family—I have seven siblings—and can fit in a Dodge Caravan. But the reality is that either way, the electorate saw right through it.

One of the reasons the electorate saw through it is because, I believe firmly, the electorate saw through the self-serving nature of those Liberal schemes. They're the Liberal schemes that the NDP wishes to perpetuate. The NDP wishes to increase a big-spending government.

This is what it comes down to. Mr. Speaker, I believe in climate change. I believe that climate change is real. It's a threat that faces society and faces Canada and Niagara. We've had four droughts in the last 10 years. We're seeing the impacts of climate change each and every day. Man has a role to play in that. We need to do what we can to encourage conservation, investment in green resources and to take care of the beautiful nature we have, but we cannot allow the left to assume some sort of ascendancy, some sort of natural superiority when it comes to conservation, when it comes to taking care of our environment. Frankly, I find it incredibly disheartening when the Liberals and the NDP will stand up and lie—and I'm sorry that I have to use that word—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I ask the member to withdraw, please.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: I will withdraw—when they use language that would indicate we do not believe in climate change and we do not think this is a threat. It's frankly false for the left-wing parties, those on the extreme left, to say this.

I know we have radical extremists in this House, and that's fine. That's fine; if they want to be, they can be. We had the member for Ottawa Centre stand up a couple of weeks ago and call himself a proud young socialist. I'm glad that he has the strength of his convictions, that he's willing to stand up and say that, because, frankly, the former Liberal government didn't have the strength of their convictions to stand up and admit what they were doing. They were socialists, too, only they weren't willing to talk about it. Thankfully, we have now an official opposition that is very honest about where it comes from. It's open and sincere about its perspectives on these important issues.

But the reality is that left-wing governments have successfully stoked the cynicism of the electorate with an alarming willingness to ignore facts and simply indulge vindictive environmental whims. What we've seen happening is that although they claim a carbon tax or a

cap-and-trade price on carbon is simply to help improve the environment, it's actually used to raise more government funds.

This is one of the big differences: We don't believe the most effective way to fight climate change, to fight the changes in our environment that we're seeing, is by forcing 80-year-olds who are on a fixed income, who have to worry about making ends meet, who have to worry about heating and eating—we don't believe that they should be so concerned about whether or not they can heat their house in the upcoming winter that they have to end up essentially on starvation rations. That's not effective climate change action.

Since the member from Ottawa Centre has talked about the need to look at some objective facts in this matter, I think it's important to say what the government south of the border has done. I'm no huge fan of the President of the United States. The current President, I think, has made mistakes. He's also done some things right. But what we have to look at is what has happened in the US when it comes to meeting climate emission targets and what has happened in Canada when it comes to meeting climate emission targets.

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We have two radically different approaches. I think it's fair to say that perhaps the President south of the border is a climate denier. The reality is that we have seen their emission reductions come far closer to their targets without carbon taxes, without cap-and-trade, in a way we have not seen from the left-leaning governments here in Canada, despite their virtue-signalling on this issue, despite their apparent willingness to stand up and sacrifice at the altar of environmental prudery, at the altar of making virtue-signalling become an end to a means for the federal Liberal government and, formerly, the provincial Liberal government. We've actually seen that the US is closer to reaching its emissions targets than Canada is. And why is that? Well, they've looked at other ways we can reduce carbon emissions, and that's what we plan to do on this side of the House.

We made a strong commitment to coming up with a climate change program that doesn't hurt the pockets of hard-working Ontarians, that makes a real difference, that makes a change when it comes to environmental policy without damaging our economy, without damaging hard-working Ontarians who are simply working to get ahead.

When we look at how mandatory mileage standards for vehicles have resulted in dramatic increases in fuel efficiency, allowing North Americans to drive larger vehicles without guzzling more gas, for example, we've seen that this also has a positive impact on reducing carbon emissions.

But what we need to look at is what happens to the funds that come from the carbon tax. And we know that the federal Liberals don't want to talk about how much the carbon tax is going to cost. They've been dodging our federal counterparts in the Conservative Party for quite some time. In fact, today they finally realized how detrimental their tax plan is going to be and now they've

softened that plan in order to ensure competitiveness—at least, that's the language they're using. We already see them backtracking and realizing some of the mistakes they've made.

Almost all provincial governments that have carbon taxes are using those carbon taxes not to cut income taxes, not to have a neutral carbon tax, as was touted by the Prime Minister, as was touted in British Columbia, for example. What they're actually doing is they're using these carbon tax revenues to increase government spending rather than cutting income taxes. Despite being unwilling to admit this, this is what we see happening.

The reality is that even though we're talking about the need to fight climate change, they use this as a tool, they use this as a means not of fighting climate change but of taking more money out of Jill and Jack's pocket and lining, once again, the government's purses. A tax is a tax is a tax, and a tax by any other name is still a tax, Mr. Speaker.

One of the other things I find so fascinating and frustrating coming from the left, and particularly those in the technocratic and academic realms, the chattering classes, who have this idea of government elitism, this idea that somehow the government can magically fix everything and make all our problems go away and be the solution to everything as opposed to getting out of the way sometimes and allowing people to make their own decisions and make some changes in a positive way—they don't seem to understand that so many businesses—and I talk to business owners who want to make investments in green energy, who want to make changes in their company, who are striving to be more energy efficient and make changes. But they can't because what's ended up happening is that they've seen that the carbon tax or cap-and-trade is removing so many revenues from their business, they can't make the changes they need in order to reduce their own emissions. It's actually ended up that it's causing more harm than good.

I get so frustrated when I hear those on the left talk about how the government needs to do this and the government needs to step in, knowing full well that as it is—and I know that's probably why the member from Ottawa on the opposite benches has advocated for a higher carbon tax: because they know, as well as we all know, that in order to effectively curb carbon emissions to a level that is meaningful, they would have to have such a high carbon tax that it would essentially completely cut our economy off at the kneecaps. They're not willing to publicly advocate for that. They don't want to talk about that, and they definitely didn't want to talk about it during the last election. I think that's why the Leader of the Opposition gets so furious when it's brought up in this House, but that's essentially what they want. They want to advocate for such an incredibly high level of carbon pricing, without a commensurate cut to the income tax, that it will kneecap our economy. And that is not an effective way to fight climate change, and we see that in the data.

In fact, the member opposite from the NDP also did bring up, I believe, a very interesting situation that I think

bears repeating when it comes to Germany. I know he was talking about Germany—the CDU in Germany, I believe, is still in power under Ms. Merkel—and he was talking about how they have this carbon tax and how wonderful that is and whatnot. A report that came out of Carnegie Mellon University this year found that the United States met the Clean Power Plan's 2025 carbon emission reduction target last year and that the US power sector could meet the Paris agreement goals even without the Clean Power Plan. Now, this is a direct quote: "Germany, meanwhile, is poised for a 'spectacular miss' of their 2020 greenhouse gas emissions-reduction target." So these are two very different jurisdictions that have different philosophies, and yet which one is closer to meeting their reductions target? The United States.

I'm not saying that we follow the American model when it comes to this issue. We absolutely—and I'm very confident that the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks will be doing an exhaustive study of best practices as it pertains to environmental technologies to see what we can do to improve our own efficiencies here in the province and increase investments in green energies. But I do think it's important that we note, when the member stands up and points to Germany as some paragon of virtue, and yet conveniently forgets that the US is closer to meeting its emissions targets than Germany is, even though Germany has this wonderful carbon tax—I think that we all have to take a step back and maybe consider his words a little more carefully.

There's an interesting report that came across my desk; it came out in June. It's called "An Ironic Outcome." That's a very fitting title. It's by Jeff Rubin from the Centre for International Governance Innovation, a highly respected think tank that does a great deal of work in governance issues and does a lot of examination, as well, of environmental policy in different jurisdictions across not only North America but internationally as well.

It's titled "An Ironic Outcome," and the underline is, "The United States—Even Under Trump—Is Closer to Meeting Its Emission Targets Than Canada." Why is that? It goes into quite extensive detail—and I know, Speaker, I still want to make sure I get a chance to address the Auditor General's recommendations.

Hon. John Yakabuski: How much is the carbon tax in the United States?

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Oh, I don't think they have one. Well, there are certain jurisdictions, I'll admit; California, for example, does have cap-and-trade. We were sending hundreds of millions of dollars to cap-and-trade there in the United States.

But how did they meet some of these reductions? One of the major things they had happening there is that they moved a lot off of coal. We saw that fracking and the shale revolution in the US really drastically reduced carbon emissions, because they moved away from coal power plants to shale. We saw a lot of natural gas now replacing coal and oil as primary heat for many houses, a much more affordable, and less detrimental to the environment, alternative.

I know that here in Ontario as well we have great access to natural gas. In Niagara, in my home riding, I regularly drive past areas where you'll see natural gas wells on farms and in some of these areas. A lot of that also is because they want to get off the grid as much as possible in order to avoid some of these taxes, especially the carbon tax that they felt was creating damage in the agricultural industry as well.

What I want to say is that the false conclusion of the left's approach to environmental policy, which is, "We don't like it, so let's tax it, and somehow, magically, that will solve the problem," is not borne out by the facts. It's an inconvenient truth, I guess, that the left does not want to admit. So I think it's important that as Conservatives we stand up and don't accept the premise of the left. The premise of the left is that because we don't believe in taxing it, and because we are looking at evidence-based decision-making that shows that taxing it is not going to have an impact until we tax it at such a level that it essentially kills all our jobs, we somehow, magically, don't like the environment. That's simply false.

1700

If you look at our history, the history of our party, the Progressive Conservative Party—look at Minister Mulroney. In fact, even Prime Minister Harper—I know the left doesn't like to see this, but they will admit that the darling child of the left-wing media, our Prime Minister—as much as I respect him—adopted Harper's climate goals. The left doesn't like talking about this because it's off their messaging, right? "Trudeau was elected on solving all the world's problems when it comes to the climate. He is going to magically fix everything, this glorious Prime Minister." And yet he actually adopted Harper's climate goals. Is that because Trudeau is so poorly considerate of the environment? No, I would argue that Prime Minister Harper cared about the environment, he understood the importance of protecting our natural environment for future generations and he recognized the need for sustainable development that protected the future as well as recognized the need for growth today.

So the fact that the Liberals and the NDP are feigning this outrage over the reduction in government revenues, the billions of dollars that are now coming out of government coffers and going back into hard-working taxpayers' pockets—this is really, really difficult for them to handle. We know they've never seen a tax they didn't like. But the science is there. The facts are clear: The carbon tax isn't doing what it was meant to do, and what it ended up doing was turning into a Liberal slush fund. That's not what Ontarians wanted.

Going back to my original history lesson, going back to 2008: Stéphane Dion had a grand plan, this Green Shift that was going to revolutionize the political understanding of environmental policy in Canada, and the voters turned him down. So what ended up happening on June 7?

We made a promise to the voters of Ontario that we were going to listen to them like Prime Minister Harper

listened to them in 2008, and we were going to take their concerns seriously. We understood that life was becoming more and more unaffordable and that the tax on everything—the carbon tax—was not the solution. We understood that the government didn't need more money in its back pocket; we needed to put more money back into their pockets.

I'm so proud to have had the chance to stand today, on behalf of the constituents of Niagara West, to add my voice to the debate on this important bill. I'm so proud of our government—our government for the people, our cabinet for the people, our Premier for the people—for doing the right thing, scrapping the cap-and-trade carbon tax and putting money back into the pockets of hard-working Ontarians.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Joel Harden: I want to thank the member from Niagara West for that stirring speech. I was reminded of some of the volumes I have in my office, which actually used to be that member's office. Von Hayek, Friedman: These are wonderful ideas in a vacuum. However, the problem is, there is such a thing as the real world. And, in the real world, I invite the member to consider his own debt—

Hon. John Yakabuski: You should visit it sometimes.

Mr. Joel Harden: I'll repeat the question because the member interrupted me.

I'll encourage the member from Niagara West to consider his own debt to socialism. I would ask the member to consider, would we have a medicare system in 2018 if the answer in the 1960s was, "Let's take our money and rebate it to individual consumers"?

The way we got a medicare system was by people coming together, banding together, in the face of significant obstacles, like a medical professions strike, and pooling their resources, not in some amorphous institution called a "government," but in a house for the people, where we created a staple that's the envy of the world and is constantly under attack, called our medicare system.

So this is where I find some humour, Mr. Speaker—because we have to in this job. The member and I stand on different polarities of the political system. While he correctly acknowledges me as a democratic socialist—and I'm proud to stand in that tradition of our party—the worry that I have, around climate change and around this government's lack of commitment to income equality, is that they maybe don't realize, at a certain level, that they're socialists too. They just believe in socialism for a very few amount of people, and capitalism for everybody else. The thing that troubles me is that, right now, there are three families—three families in Canada—that have as much wealth as 11 million people. That problem is getting worse.

As my friend from University-Rosedale was saying, we have a massive inequality crisis that this government and governments previous to it are not addressing.

Inasmuch as we don't do that, Mr. Speaker, we're not going to be able to address climate change or anything else.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mr. John Fraser: I'm really happy to respond to the member from Niagara West. I appreciate the member, because we share a passion for palliative care and it's something I consider to be a really non-partisan thing.

What I'd like to say to him is that having a plan for climate change and the environment is not a Conservative thing, an NDP thing, a Liberal thing, left-wing or right-wing. It's actually about all of us addressing the challenge that is our greatest challenge—it's the greatest challenge for our generation which is for the generations after us.

China had its first red-alert smog day a couple of years ago, where it means, "Don't go outside. Don't go outside the building, because it will make you sick." The actual leader in climate change now is China. They're a bit to the left of the folks over here.

Hon. John Yakabuski: Oh, I don't know about that.

Mr. John Fraser: There we go. Well, you know, look, it's not about that. What it is about—if you're going to throw figures out, I don't think you're right about the US being ahead. You should put that out specifically when you say that, because remember that the US left the Paris accord. The US signed off on the accord, so maybe you want to share those numbers with us when we come up, because it's easy to stand up and say those things.

The other thing is shale gas, as well. I know you touted that, but that has some really serious repercussions on things called aquifers. And what do aquifers have? They have water. What do we need? Water. It's great if you have natural gas, but if you can't drink the water, there's not much point in having that natural gas.

I want to caution the member. It's something that we all have to tackle. Your government does not have a plan for climate change. Targets are not a plan. Targets are where you get to. You have to talk about the steps to get there.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Stephen Crawford: Thank you to the member from Niagara West for very interesting historical information on the environment and climate change. We're all here talking about the carbon tax, but the reality is, it has not really had the positive effect that it's supposed to on the environment. It has really been a fiscal issue and it has been hurting people to the tune of about \$260 a year per family, which we're going to be able to save by eliminating the carbon tax.

My background: I was in the investment business for many years. I was a partner at an investment firm specializing in environmental companies and companies focused on sustainable development. I can tell you that the minister is very focused on coming up with a solution to tackling the environment and to tackling climate

change. I'll be excited to hear that; he's definitely working on that. But a carbon tax, which hurts working Ontarians, is not going to be part of that solution.

The carbon tax has hurt many people and many businesses. In my riding of Oakville, I was talking with an individual during the election campaign, and he was the owner of a restaurant on the main street in my town of Oakville. Unfortunately, he had to close his restaurant from Monday to Thursday for lunch. Now imagine a restaurant being closed for lunch; that doesn't make sense. He was only able to open for dinners. I asked him, "Why can you not open for lunch? You're a restaurant. Isn't this the business you want to be in?" "Yes, I do, but the reality is that the current government has crippled me so much with respect to high hydro, high taxes, this carbon tax and labour reforms"—which were drilled in without consultation and which unfortunately has resulted in people being laid off and less hours.

We've got a government now that is focused on battling these issues, getting Ontario back on track, and I'm pleased to be a part of that government. I'm excited to be here.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Jamie West: My congratulations to the member from Niagara West on his election.

A few comments: When he was talking about history, Mr. Speaker, I wanted to share history from Sudbury which is fairly related. I'm going to go back farther than 10 years; I'm going to go back almost 100 years or more.
1710

Sudbury, as most people know, was the nickel capital of the world. Although we produced a lot of nickel, it's a sulfide nickel, so what we produce a lot of is sulphur, and sulphur, when it's burned, becomes sulphur dioxide.

The process we used in the past to refine nickel was that we had open-pit roasters. What those are, basically, is: You put a layer of ore; you put a layer of logs; you put a layer of ore; you put a layer of logs. Then you light it on fire for about two weeks. The smoke billows through the town, and basically it burns off all the vegetation due to the high amounts of SO₂ released.

Also, by pulling the trees out of the ground, you don't have any roots holding the soil in place, so between the amount of pollution and the lack of a root system, you limit the amount of growth that's there. In fact, prior to the moon landing, NASA came to Sudbury to study what it would be like on the moon because we looked like a moonscape. Growing up as a child, I thought that rocks turned black if exposed to light, because all of our rocks were black.

The bright side of that is that if you wanted to go sliding back in the 1970s, you just picked any spot on the hill because there were no trees to get in your way.

The downside is that the pollution was abundant. When the member opposite talked about China's red-alert days, when the pollution was so bad—I grew up in a city where I remember my grandmother spitting out sulphur from her mouth because the air was so toxic.

When the member across says that the government needs to learn to get out of the way—those changes weren't made because the government got out of the way. The government got out of the way so much that they allowed over 200 parts per million. Sometimes the government has to get in the way to make change.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I now return to the member from Niagara West for final comments.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: I really enjoy the rapport we have here in the House. I think it's fascinating to see the energy that happens, especially when people start speaking extemporaneously.

I want to respond to the member for Ottawa Centre. He had an impassioned defence of socialism which was quite interesting to hear. I think it's fair to say that without free-market enterprise, it would have been very difficult for us to pay for medicare and today's health care system, of which I am a very proud supporter.

I think it's also important to recognize that when you look at how many people that free-market enterprise has lifted out of poverty in the last 18 years globally, since the year 2000, when you look at how the standard of living has increased in the last 50 years, when you look at the introduction of capitalism on the stage of world history in the last 1,000 years and you see dramatic increases in life expectancy, dramatic increases in income, in the standard of living, in employment, in human rights, it's fair to say that although correlation doesn't equal causation, there's definitely an important factor that free-market enterprise has played in lifting up not just Ontarians, but really those across our globe.

I'm very proud to be a young free-market entrepreneur, for lack of a better phrase. If you're a proud young socialist, I'm a proud young capitalist—and I'm younger, too, so I have longer in this game.

The member for Ottawa South mentioned the numbers from the US Environmental Protection Agency. I have the graph right here. I'd be happy to show the member or walk it over to him.

Thank you also to the member for Oakville for speaking about the importance of removing the carbon tax in his particular riding, as well as the member for Sudbury. It's clear that we believe in environmental protection. The government has a role to play, but the government should not be reaching into Jack and Jill's pocket, taking money out of their back pocket, lining their own and claiming it, for an unequal benefit.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate? The member from the Nickel Belt.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I feel like a star when I'm introduced by you, Speaker. It makes me feel quite important all of a sudden. Thank you for the introduction.

I will be using my 20 minutes to talk about the cap-and-trade cancellation, but I wanted to respond a little bit to the last speaker. New Democrats support businesses, but we all know that they need to have rules, and those rules come from this House.

Talking about the cap-and-trade cancellation: This is one of the few things that the Conservatives said that

they would do. The part that they did not do is: How will we lower greenhouse gas emissions and how will we fight climate change?

I can tell you that right now, in my community, there is an air quality statement in effect for Greater Sudbury and vicinity. We have poor air quality. There is reduced visibility. There is a high level of air pollution. This is due to the smoke from the forest fire at Key River that is drifting over the community.

Part of my riding, Alban, is a few kilometres away, and they have been on evacuation alert. I want people to realize how stressful it is when you have people—OPP, most of them—coming door to door, and some of the rangers, to tell you that you are on evacuation alert. There are 900 and some—close to 1,000—residents in Alban who are on evacuation alert. Many of them are farmers, so they have packed up the horses and moved them. Thankfully, there are other farmers who volunteer to take the livestock. They have moved their pigs, they have moved their chickens, they have moved everything they can move. But how do you move a potato crop? How do you move a tomato crop? You can't. Those are there.

The air quality is such that you can barely see. I was fishing Friday night and my husband and I are looking at the sun, and you couldn't see the sun for the smoke in front of it. At first I thought it was a cloud, but it made no sense because the rest of the sky was blue—it was a cloud and we couldn't see the sun, and now it is again.

So why am I talking about this? Because it is linked to climate change. We had an election. You and I both campaigned; everybody here, I'm sure, campaigned for a month. Did you know, Speaker, that from the day the writ dropped to the day of the election in Nickel Belt, it rained one day? Every single day was beautiful. At the time, I thought, "Hey, this is great for canvassing."

I have one building in Nickel Belt, so when it rains, I go to the one building. But if it rains three or four days in a row, those people get pretty tired of seeing me, because I have one building that I can door-knock at. The rest of it is all long driveways with a house at the end, and then you walk to the other long driveway with a house at the end. It's called 1 Coronation Boulevard. I did 1 Coronation only once because it only rained—really drizzled—one time. That's from the day the writ dropped till June 7. From June 7 on to about last week, it never rained. It never rained. This has never happened before.

In Nickel Belt, we are very fortunate to have plenty of beautiful lakes. Sudbury is actually called the City of Lakes because we have so many lakes. I, like 28% of the people in Nickel Belt, live on a lake. And if you don't live on a lake, you have access to a lake because you have a camp on a lake. We are very lucky. But it hasn't rained. You can see the impact it's been having. The level of lakes has gone down. We are starting to see blue-green algae. We are starting to see the quality of our lakes, which we depend on to drink, to shower, to fish, everything else—the health unit more and more is sending out those advisories that it hasn't rained for so

long that the levels of some of our big lakes are starting to go down.

And now the air quality has also gone down. I cannot tell you how irritating to the throat, to the eyes, to everything it is to be in the path of a forest fire. It is really hard to breathe. Right now, if you have to travel from Sudbury to Toronto, you drive on Highway 69—that's the name of the highway—and the fire is about five to six kilometres away from the highway. For about half an hour the smoke is so intense that even with your four-way flashers on you can barely see the cars coming the other way, because, yes, we still have a two-way highway; we don't have those big, fancy highways like you guys have down here, but we're hoping for one, let me tell you. We're hoping for one.

1720

So here we are. It is very dangerous. If you look at the tens of thousands of hectares that have been burned and all of the critters that call this forest home—for the big animals, most of them are able to run away, but for the smaller animals, they're not able to run away. All of the snakes, all of the turtles, all of the smaller animals, they all die.

Here we have this horrendous forest fire that is polluting my community. Everybody knows that it is a normal process to have a fire in the forest. The pine cones get to open up because they get the heat. Then they drop their seeds, and, oh, new pine. But right now it is not coming at a pace that is sustainable for a forest, because of the heat.

We've never had 34-degree temperatures in Nickel Belt. Most of us don't own air conditioners, because we don't need them. Let me tell you that for the last month at home without an air conditioner, it's really hot. You go for a swim just before you go to bed, and you lie there with a wet sheet, hoping that there is going to be a bit of wind, because it's pretty hard to sleep when it's 34 degrees, and it doesn't go down at night.

Something that I have done all of my life and that everybody loves: We have bonfires. We sit together, and you chat and solve all the problems of the world. We haven't been allowed to have bonfires because the risk of forest fire is too high.

I'm putting all of this on the record because climate change is real. Climate change affects us. It affects the people who live in northern Ontario. It affects the animals, mainly the small animals, who call the forest home. It affects our businesses.

I can tell you that Killarney is always a hip, happening place. If you've never been to Killarney park, please go. It is beautiful. It is on the shore of Georgian Bay. There are always tons of beautiful boats that come from the Great Lakes to Killarney. Their fish and chips—I know that it's not in my riding; it's in Michael Mantha's riding, but I'll still give it to them: They have the best fish and chips. I don't care what they say. It is just a great place.

They have zero tourists right now. They have been evacuated. All of those businesses make their money in the summer. They make their money with all of the

people who come to Killarney park, all of the boats that come to the marina and spend their money in town. They go to the fish and chips, they go to the hotels, they buy groceries. There is nothing happening in Killarney right now. They have been evacuated, and this will have a direct impact. We know that some of those businesses will survive, but we also know that some of those businesses won't survive. You cannot have zero income and continue to be in business.

This is why we need to fight climate change, and it's up to us as legislators to make sure that we have a plan, that we share this plan, that we put in specific targets, we put in deadlines, that we develop a plan and then we work it. But none of that is happening.

The easy part is to scrap what was there. That's easy; everybody loves it: \$148 more in your pocket. Doesn't that make a good bumper sticker? But that's not what we're here to do. We are not here to do bumper stickers; we are here to make sure that our province has an opportunity to prosper, that all of us, 14 million Ontarians, have an opportunity to prosper—the small businesses, the large businesses.

I'm the member for Nickel Belt. All of the mines that people talk about, that the member from Sudbury was talking about, are all in my riding. All of the mines are in my riding. Some of those mines are shut down right now. Why? Not because the price of nickel is down. Why? Because when you have a mine, you have to send clean air down, so that the people underground can breathe. Right now, there is no clean air to be had. You cannot use the ventilation system because the air quality in Sudbury is so poor, so all of those workers do not work underground anymore.

Can you start to see the impact that this is having? But all of this is preventable. How do you prevent it? You make sure that we, as legislators, use our time together to put a plan that makes sense, to put a plan that has targets, that has timelines that tell us how we are going to achieve this. The first part, the easy part—the bumper sticker part was the easy part. Now it's time to roll up your sleeves and say, "This bill doesn't cut it." What's happening in my riding in Alban, what's happening in Killarney and what's happening in Sudbury should not be happening—can be prevented.

Other communities don't have to go through what we are going through right now if we all roll up our sleeves and say that we need a strong and robust greenhouse gas emission and climate change plan. But you're not doing any of that. You're putting a bill forward that does the easy part. When are you going to roll up your sleeves and do the hard work that we were all elected to do, the hard work that will make sure that our environment is there for our kids, our grandkids and the seven generations, like the First Nations like to talk about? It is not there, but it is our responsibility. It is your responsibility to do this.

Your bill is not it. It is not it. You have to do better. To simply say that something will come without saying what this something will be, without saying when it will

be, without saying when it will be reassessed, is not enough because climate change is real. I am living it every Thursday when I go back home. Every Thursday, when I go back—and I mainly fly when I go back. The first week I flew back, we could see that Timiskaming was on fire and for hundreds of kilometres you could see this big plume of smoke coming. As we got closer to Sudbury, at the time the Key River fire had just started, when we flew over we could see the flames. By the time we got to the Sudbury airport, the way the wind was going, we had to go over top of Lake Wanapitei and you could see the fire actually in part of my riding, in Levack.

All of this is no good for nothing. It's not good for us, it's not good for the environment, it's not good for the animals, and it's not good for business. All of this is directly linked to the fact that we are living climate change right here, right now. We are seeing it on the ground. We see how devastating it is, and yet we have a government who does nothing.

The alarm bells are going off. If Alban needs to be evacuated, that's 1,000 people. If Sudbury needs to be evacuated, that's 180,000 people. Where do you evacuate 180,000 people to? It's going to be a challenge of proportions that I don't even want to think about, but it is there. It is real. If anybody cares to drive up Highway 69 north, you will see it for yourself.

For me, it is very real. I hear the alarm bells, and I would like you to listen to them also. I would like you to spring into action and make sure that if you don't want cap-and-trade—you've made that clear, sure, scrap that, but tell me how you will protect us from climate change. What is your plan? What is your deliverable? Let's talk about this. This is our job. This is why all of us got elected. This is what we're here to do. When are we going to do that, Speaker?

1730

I'm ready to have this conversation right here, right now, but this conversation is not taking place. Instead, we talk about \$148 more in your pocket. You can ask any of my constituents who have had to move their horses and their pigs and their chickens and their cows what \$148 more in their pocket will do. It pays the gas for one trip; that's about all it does. The rest of it is all hard labour and pretty scary.

Cap-and-trade: You've made it clear that it's gone. But there were programs that cap-and-trade helped: the Hospital Energy Efficiency Program—I never liked the name; it was called HEEP. That was \$64 million that was available to hospitals if they wanted to become more energy-efficient. I can tell you that hospitals use a ton of hydro. Their hydro bills have gone through the roof, just like your and my hydro bills. It made no difference. This helped them reduce their hydro bills.

There were three initiatives that were very popular. The one that was the most popular was installing wireless occupancy sensors. There are lots of places in hospitals where the lights are on 24/7. If you would go into a clean utility, a dirty utility—in a lot of places in the hospital, the lights never went out. But now, with that little bit of

money, they could install wireless occupancy sensors so that when you walked into the clean utility or the dirty utility, the light came on and, 30 seconds after you left, the light went off. For the hospitals that were able to take part in this program, it paid off. Turning all those lights off where there was nobody anyway made a huge difference.

The other program was boiler replacements and improvements to air-handling units and cooling tower efficiency. That little bit of money that was available to them allowed them to do renovations that allowed them to use less electricity and decrease their hydro bills. The money that they don't spend on hydro, Speaker, they spend on us, making sure we get the care we need when we go to the hospital.

They were also allowed to use some of that money to do roof insulation. In my neck of the woods, most small hospitals have been there for, let's just say, a very long time. There haven't been too many redevelopments of the small hospitals in northern Ontario. Most of them were built at a time when insulation sometimes was newspaper, so if the little bit of money they were getting allowed them to decrease their heating costs, that made a big difference on their hydro bill. Those opportunities to decrease their use of hydro are gone.

And now I just realized that there are only seconds left on the clock. How did that happen? I still have way more to talk about.

Climate change is here. It's real. I want the government to roll up their sleeves and tell us when we are going to see a plan coming forward from this government so that what's happening in my community doesn't happen in any of yours.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions and comments?

Mr. David Piccini: I appreciate the opportunity to speak to this. I heard great words there: "Spring into action." Mr. Speaker, that's exactly what this government has done. We've been elected on a mandate to spring into action, and that involves cleaning up the hydro mess. You want to talk about rural Ontario and your communities. I, too, represent a rural community. It's about the dignity of looking into the eyes of moms and dads, young professionals trying to make a living on \$30,000 or \$35,000, and then seeing hydro executives pad their pockets with that same increase, which this opposition supported. Where's the dignity in that? That's about the moms and dads who looked at us and said, "We want action," that we have to take that ship, we need a bold new direction, we need to turn the course. It's about inner-city, wealthy folks who are driving Teslas receiving \$14,000 rebates while mums and dads in my community struggle to pay the gas bills to get their kids to hockey.

The cap-and-trade program and the mess of an environment program by which the previous government had brought solar farms into my community, that saw prime agricultural land, class 1 to 3 land—Doug Aspinall, a respected scientist out of Guelph did a

study—in my community being repurposed for solar farms, for energy that we don't need, to pad the pockets of Californians. So it's about the conditions.

We acknowledge climate is changing. But this is the fundamental difference between our party, the governing party, and the opposition: We don't believe that bigger government—we believe in getting the government off our backs—

Mr. Taras Natyshak: You do not believe in science.

Mr. David Piccini: We don't believe in taxing people to death to support your pet projects, no. We believe in empowering the individuals. We've talked about an emissions reductions fund—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Order.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I try not to hear anything you say, Sam.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): The member from Essex, order.

Mr. David Piccini: Can I have a few more seconds here, Mr. Speaker? Thank you. You see, when we offend their sensibilities, they get really angry.

We've got a plan, an emissions reduction plan—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you. I apologize.

Further questions and comments?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Just a couple of points to what was said just before and what was said by the member from Nickel Belt.

First of all, the whole idea that cap-and-trade doesn't do anything in order to mitigate emissions to our environment is a bit silly. The reality of what cap-and-trade was about is making the polluters pay for mitigating programs that allow us to reduce our carbon footprint. That's the essential idea of what cap-and-trade was about.

So what I think the government was trying to do—and I will admit how they did it was flawed, and there are things that had to be changed within the cap-and-trade system that was invented by the Liberal government. I will agree with you on that. But the basic premise, that if we can find ways of diminishing the amount of energy we utilize so that we don't put pollutants into the environment, whatever they might be—that's a good thing.

How do you incent people to get there? There are only a couple of ways.

You do it on your own because it's the right thing to do. Well, how many people actually do that? Sometimes we do that, but if you can't afford to buy a better furnace or change the processes within your company that may lead to pollution—and it's all voluntary—it's not going to happen.

The other way to do it is the government can say, "We'll take tax dollars in order to create incentives in order to assist."

Hon. John Yakabuski: A bad way.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: And I agree with my friend from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke: I don't think you should entirely use tax dollars to do that either.

The idea under cap-and-trade was that the polluters pay and the money collected from the cap-and-trade system then allows people to change the windows on their house, allows a company to invest in new technology that reduces their carbon emissions—whatever they might be. It's a way of incenting people to do the right thing.

So to argue that cap-and-trade does nothing to help the environment is completely a false argument. I would ask the government on the other side to at least consider that there was some motive of good in this bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: I think one thing that we need to make very clear is that our party recognizes that climate change is here and climate change is real. But we don't believe in taxing the hard-working people of Ontario to pay for failed ideologies on the other side of the House.

I had the chance to knock on thousands of doors in my riding. I met families that were struggling to put food on the table and struggling paycheque to paycheque. So when our government is taking action and making sure families are saving \$260 a year, that's real action. That's exactly what we want to do and the exact opposite of what the members opposite are proposing or advocating—\$2 a litre on gas. That's just unbelievable, unfortunate and will cripple this economy.

That's been the mandate of this government. When we look at our hydro, we want to make sure that we reduce our hydro rates by 12% and make life more affordable for people. We want to make sure that we reduce gas prices, like we have promised, and this bill is doing exactly that and helping us start the process of lowering gas prices by 10 cents a litre.

1740

So I'm really proud to stand here with my colleagues and advocate to make life more affordable, make life easier, and also ensure that we have a sustainable environment and we make sure that we work towards fighting climate change—which nobody over here has denied, and we acknowledge it. But exactly what we don't want to do is make sure that hard-working people—the single mothers working day and night to feed their families—are hurt by these policies.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Jamie West: I appreciate the opportunity to continue what I was talking about in Sudbury in the past. I appreciate the opportunity, especially because it was such a dark conversation about it being a moonscape, and I want to explain to the Legislature how beautiful Sudbury is now, as the member from Nickel Belt alluded to. Nickel Belt and Sudbury, for example, would be—if you think of Nickel Belt as the doughnut, Sudbury is the Timbit in the middle, and it is actually very beautiful.

I was talking about government getting out of the way. Back in the 1970s, there was actually a regulation for the amount of pollution you could have for SO₂. It's 100

parts per million; above that is IDLH, "immediately dangerous to life or health." There was an exclusion to two companies, two mining companies in Sudbury, who were allowed to have twice that amount, or up to 200 parts per million. What the citizens of Sudbury did is actually measure the pollution in the air and give readings to the local radio station, and that pressure created the force and impetus that the government had to make changes. They couldn't look the other way. They couldn't stop getting out of the way of business, and they had to focus on actually helping people and being a government for the people.

What had happened was that the Superstack was built in 1971 and, through continual pressure, that limit of 200 parts per million back in the 1970s has now dropped down to less than one part per million. In fact, because of the incentives of the government pressuring and getting in the way of business from polluting and harming people, it has incentivized those mining companies to actually capture all the SO₂ and not infect the environment. That's the importance of the government choosing when to get in the way and when not to get out of the way.

The fact of the matter is that the free, open economy doesn't incentivize people to make the efforts that you have to, and you do actually have to put your thumb on the scale. That's the role of the government: to make smart decisions to help not just business but the people who live within the communities as well.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Now I return to the member from Nickel Belt for final comments.

M^{me} France Gélinas: The scrapping of the cap-and-trade is something that you have campaigned on and that you're doing, but you never campaigned on cancelling the GreenON program. I want to read into the record what my constituents have told me:

"I saw ... with consternation, that the GreenON fund and its programs are being 'quietly axed'.

"This could produce substantial hardship for my family, because after much careful consideration, I signed a contract on June 13 to get a cold-climate heat pump installed at our home. The installation date is set for" the end of August. "A 20% deposit has been made." And she sent me her bill: \$4,450.23 plus HST.

Another one: "I am writing to express my significant displeasure at the recent announcement by the ... Conservative government to cancel the window rebate (green energy program).

"My husband and I have made a commitment to put down a deposit on new windows for our house. However, given the demand the contractor is uncertain as to whether or not they will be able to deliver the windows within the" narrow opportunity "that was provided." She was expecting \$5,000 in rebate. The cancellation is "completely unacceptable."

It goes on to say, "Let's see how small business will be affected with this cancellation. Talk about hitting the little guy who employs so many on these projects. It's

obvious what we are in for, in the province, for the next" four "years. And this is just the start—how is this helping small business? Please be sure and ask this question of Mr. Ford."

It goes on to say, "Unfortunately because of the popularity of the fund there is an extremely long back order for specific items, in my case windows. I've been given" another 12 weeks before installation. They will miss the deadline. They will be out the \$1,500 expected as a rebate.

The list goes on, Speaker.

PRIVATE MEMBERS'
PUBLIC BUSINESS

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I recognize the chief government whip on a point of order.

Mr. Bill Walker: I'm seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Just on the point of order, I'm fine, but I want to, for the record—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Okay, I recognize the member from Timmins on a point of order.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Mr. Speaker, we have been given an advance copy of the motion, which is good. We had a general conversation with regard to making an accommodation for two other members that's not in writing. I'm fine with it and we'll let it go, but next time please put it in writing or else we will not be able to say yes.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): The government whip is seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion regarding private members' public business. Agreed? Agreed.

Back to Mr. Walker.

Mr. Bill Walker: I move that, notwithstanding standing order 98(c), the following changes be made to the ballot list: Madame Gélinas and Ms. Armstrong exchange places in order of precedence such that Madame Gélinas assumes ballot item number 68 and Ms. Armstrong assumes ballot item number 8; Mr. Walker and Miss Surma exchange places in order of precedence such that Mr. Walker assumes ballot item number 10 and Miss Surma assumes ballot item number 35; and Ms. Hunter and Mr. Gravelle exchange places in order of precedence such that Ms. Hunter assumes ballot item number 21 and Mr. Gravelle assumes ballot item number 39; and that, notwithstanding standing order 98(g), notice for ballot items 7 through 12 be waived.

Interjection: Dispense.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Give me a chance, first of all.

The chief government whip has moved unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business: "I move that, notwithstanding standing order 98(c)"—

Interjection: Dispense.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Dispense? Agreed? Agreed.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

CAP AND TRADE
CANCELLATION ACT, 2018

LOI DE 2018 ANNULANT LE PROGRAMME
DE PLAFONNEMENT ET D'ÉCHANGE

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mr. Bill Walker: It's a pleasure to stand to speak to Bill 4, An Act respecting the preparation of a climate change plan, providing for the wind down of the cap and trade program and repealing the Climate Change Mitigation and Low-carbon Economy Act, 2016.

I'd like to start with a quote: "Ontario's carbon tax era is over," and "cancelling of the cap-and-trade carbon tax [is] the right thing to do, it's a good thing to do, and it's one more example of promises made, promises kept." That was Rod Phillips, Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks.

Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to stand here today. I've heard a number of the members opposite in the official opposition talking about California. It's worth pointing out that California generates more than 60% of its electricity from natural gas. I'm not certain that's where we want to be going.

Also worth pointing out is that Ontario's grid is 98% carbon-free, and a big reason for that is Candu technology and our resilient nuclear fleet. I want to pay special recognition, of course, to the talented and dedicated people at Bruce Power next door, in the riding of the member from Huron-Bruce and Minister of Education, Lisa Thompson, all of the fine people who work there and the people who support that great facility to provide us low-cost, stable, emissions-free baseload energy.

The members opposite have a long history of opposing nuclear energy. Specifically—and I get along with him well, I respect him, but on this point we definitely are diametrically opposed—the member for Toronto-Danforth continues to be on a crusade to close every nuclear plant in the province. We know that in the election they were even talking about Pickering, which would have impacted 7,500 jobs in that area alone.

We want to make sure that, at the end of the day, we keep our nuclear fleet going. Bruce Power, as an example, has a 30%-less-than-average cost to generate residential power. That's the type of power we want. Again, I'm going to repeat it: low-cost, stable, emissions-free baseload energy that keeps us competitive and ensures that our businesses, our homes and our families actually have affordable energy.

As the member for Barrie-Innisfil, my colleague Andrea Khanjin, stated yesterday, it was Progressive Conservative minister Elizabeth Witmer who first closed a coal plant. That's relevant to this debate, because on the one hand we have the members opposite acting like

orange Liberals again by defending the last government's cap-and-trade policy, and on the other hand they're attacking nuclear power, which is responsible in large part for keeping Ontario's emissions in check.

If you look at California, where they're trying to take the Diablo Canyon nuclear reactor offline, they are actually going to end up replacing it with natural gas. How can they stand there and talk about the environment and support those types of initiatives?

1750

The members opposite claim to care about the environment and claim to care about unions, but they're attacking the one industry that has almost exclusively unionized workers and that is doing the most to help Ontario fight climate change.

They talked a fair bit today about Germany. Mr. Speaker, if you look at it, Germany has said it's going to close its nuclear plants. It hasn't replaced that power with renewables. It has built 10.7 gigawatts of new coal-powered generation. Again, they're telling us to follow California; they're telling us to follow Germany. Natural gas and coal are not what we should be doing when we have the ability here in Ontario to use nuclear and certainly hydroelectric power wherever we can.

In spite of the fact that it hosted the UN climate conference last year, Germany has actually seen its carbon emissions rise over the last years—not the lead I think we should be following.

Members opposite treat places like California and Germany, both of whom have been participants in the cap-and-trade system, like they're role models. I believe our role models in Ontario should be the men and women refurbishing the reactors and working at places like Bruce, Darlington and Pickering because they're on the front lines when it comes to climate change.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk a little bit as well—the member from Timmins talked about the reason for cap-and-trade and the good things, but what I want to suggest to him that he didn't share is, we want to talk about things like the concern I have that it's actually paying to pollute. One of the biggest issues we've had, whether it was cap-and-trade or a carbon tax we're talking about in this House, is actually the reality that none of those polluters have to stop producing and emitting the emissions. They just pay a fee to do that. Worse than that, we send that money—most of it—to California, which they're so excited about. They're sending our money to make them even more profitable, make them more competitive against the businesses here in Ontario. I just do not understand it.

I want to just grab a quick quote here because I think it's well worth sharing. And this isn't Bill Walker talking; this is actually the *Globe and Mail*. I'm just going to give you a little quote out of this article:

"Industry lobbyists argue Ottawa needs to offset any cost impact of a rising carbon tax.

"If the countries with whom we are competing—and especially that big one to the south of us—do not have that kind of a [carbon tax] system in place, then you're

having your hands tied behind your back," said Dennis Darby, president of the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters association. He urged the government to find a way to return the revenues to companies to help them adjust and innovate."

We've stood strong throughout all of the debate on cap-and-trade and carbon and we can't just sit and listen to the spin. We have to actually get back to the practicality of what the impacts are going to be not only to the businesses of our communities and our great province of Ontario, but the people who pay the freight across the board. That cap-and-trade was going to increase every single cost that we have. Whether it be gas, groceries, the purchase of your car and all of your implements, for every single one of those it would have had a negative impact because of that cap-and-trade. Again, let's not lose sight of how much impact it would have been to our competitive economy—the ability to have competitors south of the border not having a carbon tax and going head-to-head with us and competing on our global markets.

I want to make sure we understand that and never lose sight of it. We're standing here—and a number of my colleagues have said it: They try to spin that we're against climate control—absolutely, unequivocally not. Premier Bill Davis is one of the biggest environmentalists out there, and I'm proud, with all of my colleagues, to say he was the person who started thinking about it years and years ago. We just have a difference of opinion on how that side wants to get there and what we do. A number of my colleagues have said, again, that it's not a case of just taxing and taxing and adding and pretending that it's going to go away because—as I've shared already three times, I think, at the end of the day there were no carbon emissions by the government or the opposition supporting cap-and-trade. We were just going to allow them to pay to pollute and pretend the world was going to be wonderful because we could stand and say in the headlines that we're supporting cap-and-trade. It's unacceptable.

My good friend the member from Nickel Belt—and I'm going to quote—said the words that she wants a plan. She wants "the deliverables," and she's standing here ready to talk today. I've had a lot of good conversations, I've worked very closely, particularly on health care issues, with her and I find her to be a fine, upstanding member, but I hope she'll go back to some of her colleagues after the first couple of weeks we've had in here and talk to them about the derogatory nature of the discussions in this House and the debate and lower that—and particularly the leader. We can have ways to communicate in this House. We can debate civilly and ensure that we're all working for the betterment, but not when you start off with derogatory statements that are only looking to actually rise up against people, get people fired up and go to the press and the headlines. We need to have quality conversations, Mr. Speaker, so that we're all working to bring legislation that's going to benefit the people of Ontario over and over.

Mr. Speaker, at the end of the day, I'm very proud of our new minister. He has only been a cabinet minister for a couple of weeks and he has already brought in this legislation.

We said in the election campaign that we would eliminate the cap-and-trade program. Promise made; promise kept. By eliminating that cap-and-trade carbon tax, it is going to save the average family \$260 per year. In addition to saving families money, the elimination of the cap-and-trade carbon tax will remove a cost burden from Ontario businesses, again making us more competitive. What better way to lift people out of poverty? Give them a good job, give them the opportunity to have a good job and be productive members of our society and make them proud to be Ontarians, allowing them to grow and create jobs and compete in other jurisdictions.

It is anticipated that through the cancellation of cap-and-trade and reducing the fuel tax, Ontario will create an estimated 14,000 jobs. The people of Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound support that. They certainly want to see that.

This is real progress, Mr. Speaker. This isn't a government like the 15 years we watched the Liberals, who would study and study and pay more and more money out to their well-heeled friends to do more studies. We're actually a government of action. We want to make a true difference to the people of Ontario. We're ensuring that people can get up in the morning and know that there is more affordability in their world, that they actually have hope to be able to pay their bills and to have the type of lifestyle that we all want for them.

The orderly and transparent winding down of the cap-and-trade carbon tax will benefit all Ontarians while offering some support for eligible registered participants in the previous program. We're ensuring that no additional cap-and-trade carbon tax costs will be imposed on suppliers to avoid passing these costs to consumers.

Mr. Speaker, at the end of the day we've heard people across the aisle condemning us and complaining about what we're doing. By cancelling the cap-and-trade, we'll repeal the cap-and-trade. Promise made; promise kept.

We'll extinguish allowances. Promise made; promise kept. We'll protect taxpayers from further costs. Promise made; promise kept. And we'll set out regulation-making authority for a compensation framework.

Our government looks forward to moving past the previous government's obsession with raising taxes, instead focusing on an environmental plan that works. Because while we understand the challenges that climate change represents, we do not believe that the solution is found in a regressive tax. That is why our plan for the people made it clear that we will deliver real action on providing clean air and water, with a focus on conservation, reducing emissions and cleaning up litter, garbage and waste.

I encourage all those members who continually talk against us and say we're anti-environment to stand with us, to actually work as a collaborative government, to say that we're going to do what's best for the people of Ontario and forget the partisan stuff once and for all.

If passed, the legislation we are tabling would help us put in a better plan for addressing real environmental goals, including fighting climate change. It is our commitment to put in place a more effective plan, a made-in-Ontario solution to address the environmental challenges we face while respecting taxpayers. That's what I am here to do for the people of Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, as all of my colleagues are here as well. Promise made—

Interjections: Promise kept.

Mr. Bill Walker: We've made progress. We had the member from Timmins sounding off: "Promise made; promise kept." Hear, hear. He may be in trouble because that's twice now. The people of Timmins have heard him say it's not the greatest city earlier today, and now he's cheering me on. We're making real progress in the House today, ladies and gentlemen. Promise made; promise kept.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): It is now almost 6 o'clock. Unfortunately, this House stands adjourned until 9 o'clock tomorrow morning.

The House adjourned at 1758.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
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Clerk / Greffier: Todd Decker

Deputy Clerk / Sous-greffier: Trevor Day

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Tonia Grannum, Valerie Quioc Lim, William Short

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergente d'armes: Jacquelyn Gordon

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| Bailey, Robert (PC) | Samia—Lambton | |
| Barrett, Toby (PC) | Haldimand—Norfolk | |
| Begum, Doly (NDP) | Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest | |
| Bell, Jessica (NDP) | University—Rosedale | |
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| Bouma, Will (PC) | Brantford—Brant | |
| Bourgoin, Guy (NDP) | Mushkegowuk—James Bay / Mushkegowuk—Baie James | |
| Burch, Jeff (NDP) | Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre | |
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| Coteau, Michael (LIB) | Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est | |
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| Cuzzetto, Rudy (PC) | Mississauga—Lakeshore | |
| Des Rosiers, Nathalie (LIB) | Ottawa—Vanier | |
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| Gélinas, France (NDP) | Nickel Belt | |
| Ghamari, Goldie (PC) | Carleton | |
| Gill, Parm (PC) | Milton | |
| Glover, Chris (NDP) | Spadina—Fort York | |
| Gravelle, Michael (LIB) | Thunder Bay—Superior North / Thunder Bay—Supérieur-Nord | |
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| Karahalios, Belinda (PC) | Cambridge | |
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| Kernaghan, Terence (NDP) | London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord | |
| Khanjin, Andrea (PC) | Barrie—Innisfil | |
| Kramp, Daryl (PC) | Hastings—Lennox and Addington | |
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| MacLeod, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa (PC) | Nepean | Minister of Children, Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine |
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| Mantha, Michael (NDP) | Algoma—Manitoulin | |
| Martin, Robin (PC) | Eglinton—Lawrence | |
| Martow, Gila (PC) | Thornhill | |
| McDonell, Jim (PC) | Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry | |
| McKenna, Jane (PC) | Burlington | |
| McNaughton, Hon. / L'hon. Monte (PC) | Lambton—Kent—Middlesex | Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure |
| Miller, Norman (PC) | Parry Sound—Muskoka | |
| Miller, Paul (NDP) | Hamilton East—Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est—Stoney Creek | |
| Mitas, Christina (PC) | Scarborough Centre / Scarborough- Centre | |
| Monteith-Farrell, Judith (NDP) | Thunder Bay—Atikokan | |
| Morrison, Suze (NDP) | Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre | |
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| Natyshak, Taras (NDP) | Essex | |

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| Sabawy, Sheref (PC) | Mississauga—Erin Mills | |
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| Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh (PC) | Brampton South / Brampton-Sud | |
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| Singh, Gurratan (NDP) | Brampton East / Brampton-Est | |
| Singh, Sara (NDP) | Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre | |
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| Smith, Dave (PC) | Peterborough—Kawartha | |
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| Stiles, Marit (NDP) | Davenport | |
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